THE PHILOSOPHY OF CATHARISM

René Nelli

BERSERKER
BOOKS

By the same author:

WORKS ON CATHARISM

SPIRITUALITY OF HERESY, Catharism, Toulouse, Paris, Privat, P. U. F., 1953.

Cathar Ritual, 'La Fenêtre ardente', 1964.

THE CATHARS (in collaboration with F. Niel, D. Rochë, J. Duvernoy), Paris, Editions de Delphes, 1965.

THE MUSEUM OF CATHARISM, Toulouse, Privat, 1966.

THE CATHAR PHENOMENON, new edition, Toulouse, Paris, Privat, P. U. F., 1968.

CATHAR WRITINGS, new expanded edition, *Planète,* 1968.

DICTIONARY OF SOUTHERN HERESIES, Toulouse, Privat, 1969.

Lx UE QUOTIENNE OF THE CATHARS FROM THE LANGUEDOC TO xijqe siùccx, Paris, Hachette, 1969.

THE CATHARS OR THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE, Paris: 'Culture-arts-leisure', Grasset, 1972.

A HISTORY OF THE LANGUEDOC, Paris, Hachette, 1974.

The Philosophy of Catharism

Radical Dualism
au XIII^e siècle

INTRODUCTION

Whilst there are many works dealing with the two forms of Catharism—that is to say, absolute Dualism and so-called 'moderate' Dualism, there are, to my knowledge, few that are devoted solely to the study of Radical or Absolute Dualism, as it manifested itself *in* its purest *philosophical* form in the Occitan and Italian Catharism of the 13th century. My aim here is to identify, on the basis of the three sources at our disposal—Bartholomew's **Traité* caffiare*, the *Livre *des deux princes*,* and the *doctrine of* Leon *de Lugio* (summarised by Raynier Sacconi), the fundamental characteristics of dualist thought in the Middle Ages and in the West.

Moderate Dualism and Valdism may be of great interest to the historian of religions, but it must be acknowledged that, for the philosopher, neither of them differs substantially from traditional Christianity. It matters little whether Lucifer is the organiser, or even the creator, of this world, as in relative dualism, or whether he is simply its *Prince,* as in the Gospel of John and in Catholicism, provided that this organisation and creation took place with the permission and under the guidance of a single God. Given that, according to these false dualists, creatures attain final salvation as a reward, that is to say, as a consequence of their meritorious actions freely performed, there is a difference between their system — which adopts *all* the metaphysical postulates of Christianity — and that of the Radical Dualists, which draws its inspiration — even if it does not derive directly from it — from the themes of the Old

Manichaeism—there is more difference than between Catholicism and Relative Dualism. Only Radical Dualism exhibits an originality and characteristics that are absolutely irreconcilable with Roman orthodoxy.

We have very little information on what
the earliest form of Catharism to appear in Europe at the beginning of the 11th century: in Champagne (1004 and 1144), at Orléans (1019), at Monteforte (Italy 1028) and in many other regions of France, Italy and Germany. It is likely that it corresponded above all to a popular mystical movement and that it did not concern itself much with metaphysics nor worry about the relationships that might exist between Good and Evil, being and nothingness. What stood out in people's minds was the obvious, immediate meaning of the Christian myth: 'A heavenly being (Jesus Christ) is cast into the realm of evil (this world), which can neither understand nor love him. The Prince of this world condemns him to death and torture. But this sacrifice or atonement immediately results, on the higher planes, in the defeat of Satan, so that it is, in truth, Death, Sin and the Devil himself who are crucified in the unseen (or 'swallowed up'). This was simple, virtually irrefutable, and did not contradict John's Gospel. There was God, and there was the Devil. But it mattered little to these souls, so intent on purification, whether Evil was eternal or temporal, an absolute principle or a derived principle (as in Lactantius). It was enough for them that the diabolical figure—whose role was already very significant in Roman Catholicism—should be placed in his rightful position as the instigator of sin and prince of the visible world.

It is highly probable that Bogomil missionaries—some absolute dualists, others relative dualists—travelled throughout France as early as the 12th century. However, it does not appear that the teachings of either group possessed a particularly coherent philosophical content. Absolute dualism
was certainly modelled on natural oppositions: Darkness
Darkness and Light, Life and Death, Good and Evil; and whilst it posited the existence of two enemy gods, this was undoubtedly at the cost of a contradiction: it pitted against one another two *intelligent* beings, equally *powerful,* two supreme beings!

It is generally accepted that following the arrival in the West (Italy, France) in 1167 of the Bulgarian-Byzantine priest Nicetas, of the Church of Dragovista and a radical dualist, many Italian Cathars—and most Occitan Cathars—embraced his doctrine. And no doubt this doctrine was better developed than the Catharism that had preceded it. But everything suggests that it appealed more to faith than to reason and that it had not resolved or perhaps even dispel the contradictions set out above. And it was expressed chiefly through myths.

It is perhaps for this reason that most scholars who study Catharism have focused primarily on its religious and mythical aspects — which is perfectly legitimate — but have also been too inclined to downplay its philosophical, dialectical and rational content, which is far less so. Some of them — and by no means the least significant — — instead of attempting to bring some order to these heterodox theories, merely reproduce, haphazardly and uncritically, the preposterous myths of which Dualism has undoubtedly made misuse, though only in less educated circles. In this field, however, the correct method would be to *explain the myth through the doctrine* rather *than the doctrine through the myth.* And even then, it seems to me, one should only refer to these legends after having ascertained that they were genuinely established and widely prevalent amongst the faithful at that time, and that they were not the product of individual imagination. It would be even safer to take into consideration only those which the Cathars themselves have **provided,** as they do in the **Exempla** an abstract explanation, thereby clearly demonstrating that they did not take this fantasy literally, nor seriously...

It appears that neither Bartholomew, nor the author of the *Liser*, nor,

it would seem, Jean de Lugio, succumbed to mythomania. The first two *do not cite any myths.* And those reported by Jean de Lugio (according to Raynier Sacconi) are **borrowed** from the Bible.

It is clear that Bartholomé's **Trailé calhare**, composed almost entirely of scriptural quotations, and the *Livre *des deux: princi pes**, which is likewise full of them, are primarily intended to edify the faithful, to reassure them by showing that their faith is not at odds with tradition: they are therefore 'religious' books. However, one cannot deny that certain fundamental propositions of *the *Traité calhare** and the discussions on *creation* and *free will,* found in both *Jean de Lugio* and the *Livre *des deux princes**, display the rigour in dialectic and reasoning that characterise philosophical discourse. Their authors draw not only on scriptural authority, but also on Augustinianism (Bartholomew) and Aristotelianism (John of Lugio). The resurgence in the 13th century of a radical dualism — quite similar, all things considered, to ancient Manichaeism and yet such that it seems to have emerged fully formed from the meditation on *John's* *Aranyife* — is certainly a phenomenon quite surprising in itself and deserving of more attention than it is generally accorded (it is surprising that it never features, except in the form of a brief entry, in the *'encyclopaedias of medieval philosophy').* Even if the treatises in question were utterly devoid of human value — which is not the case — they would nevertheless, by necessity, possess great historical value simply because they are the only ones in the West to expound radical Dualism. But it seems to me that their importance is further enhanced if we accurately reconstruct the ideological background in which they are rooted, *which* is not *the Dualism of Mani,* but the Christianity of the Catholic theologians of the time and a certain form of Aristotelianism. Consequently, Radical Dualism appears to be founded in the West *on* a philosophical framework quite distinct *from that of ancient Manichaeism.* It utilises—or attempts to utilise—*scholasticism* to its own advantage. And it is in this respect, above all, that it is of interest to the development of Western thought.

Just as the differences between the various absolutist tendencies have been **greatly** exaggerated—because they have been viewed from a religious rather than a philosophical perspective—notably between the Languedocian Bartholomew—

lome and the Italian John of Lugio — so too have the differences separating John of Lugio and the author of *the *De duis principiis** from their predecessors (the Albanenses) been exaggerated. In reality, we shall see, on the one hand, that Languedoc Dualism rests on the same foundations as that of John of Lugio (as regards, naturally, *the existence of the two principles, the denial of free will, the theory of creation,* etc.) and that, on the other hand, Jean de Lugio's doctrine does not represent a significant departure from that of Belesmanza's disciples.

The similarities between Bartholomew's **Traité**, that of John of Lugio and the **Book of the* Two *Principles** can be explained by the fact that all three were composed between 1220 and 1240,— — when Catharism was forced to adopt a more philosophical stance in order to defend itself and, in order to better counter Catholic, 'moderate' or Waldensian arguments, had to draw upon scholastic theology. It is inconceivable that the Dualists did not then recognise the weak point in their doctrine, which certainly lies in the difficulty of eternally opposing two principles equal in *being,* of making Evil into something when it is nothing, of speaking of essences that are eternally good and yet become corrupted...

It is therefore no coincidence that the authors of the two Treatises —and John of Lugio, writing in similar circumstances and under the same pressures — were led not only to explain themselves more clearly, one (Bartholomew) on the *ontological problem,* the other, John of Lugio, on the modification *of essences* — and to reflect on the idea of *creation* ('from good to better' and 'from evil to worse'), but also, and *above all, to harden their dualist position* even whilst they claimed to be moving somewhat closer to Catholic monism. The ideas expressed by our Cathar doctors, so bold, so revolutionary for their time, undoubtedly uphold radical dualism (by diminishing the power of the true God in Time and in Manifestation) and set out the broad outlines of a system which, by destroying the notion of the 'human person', leaves only *two figures* present in the world*: God and the Adversary.*

There have no doubt been other treatises—perhaps better conceived—but I do not believe they could have been very difficult—

— in their line of reasoning — from those **we** possess. The effort made by Bartholomew to graft Cathar ontology onto Augustinian ontology, by John of Lugio to rationalise the 'creation-corruption' dualism, and by both of them to generalise Dualism to the grandiose dimensions of a cosmic tragedy, were certainly, whatever may have been said, in the spirit and destiny of Western Dualism, of which our two treatises, far from being 'accidents', constitute, on the contrary, its almost definitive expression.

One will therefore find here an in-depth study of the only philosophical texts on radical Dualism that have come down to us. I have endeavoured to understand them in all their depth, that is to say, *from all their perspectives,* and to explain, as far as I have been able, the contradictions or difficulties they present, rather than ignoring them or even exacerbating them, as scholars 'who do not like Dualism' unconsciously do, decreeing *a priori* that it can be nothing but a web of nonsense (*). It is really all too easy, *through sheer rigour* and under the pretext of objectivity, prudence or scientific precision, to render the newest and most fruitful propositions utterly absurd. For my part, therefore, starting instead from the idea that radical Dualism played a leading role in the evolution of human thought, I have regarded with respect — and curiosity — a curiosity that is necessarily unfulfilled, because, alas, our texts do not provide answers to everything — the dilapidated and half-ruined monuments of Cathar doctrine; and I have endeavoured to rediscover their explicit and *implicit* meaning.

The chapters that make up this essay were written at different times. Sometimes they overlap and imply

(*) One *could* write a book, a *psychological analysis,* on the harmful effects of scientism when it joins forces with anti-dualist dogmatism. Even the finest Latin scholar commits *inezpficoöles* misinterpretations when it comes to understanding a neo-Manichaean text... Even the finest translator unwittingly *adds* to a certain Cathar text redotilobfes words which **are not there and render it absurd...**

some repetitions. We have not sought to remove them. Dualist metaphysics is convoluted and difficult. I thought that the reader — keen to grasp it fully — would not mind seeing it expressed at times in two different but complementary forms, and that they would be particularly grateful to me for not having to leaf through my book in every direction to find the passage or note to which, had I removed the repetitions, I would have had to refer them.

We have included, in the appendix, as examples or evidence, a number of texts and documents which help to understand the spirit of Cathar Dualism.

CHAPTER ONE THE

CATHAR

INTERPRETATION
OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT JOHN

The Gospel of John was influenced by dualistic concepts, at times foreshadowing those of *Gnosticism,* which, according to the editors of the 'Jerusalem' Bible, were already expressed in the Essene documents of Qumran, 'through the opposites of Light and Darkness, Truth and Falsehood, angel of light and angel of darkness' (Beliar). This dualism, which could easily be discerned through meditation, would almost suffice to explain the emergence and development of Western Catharism,
which was, as it were, foreshadowed within it. It is certain that the Cathars of the 13th century sought and found in the Gospel of John,
which is more 'esoteric' than the others, the justification for their own theories. They held it in particular reverence, because it bears witness to an aspiration towards unity linked to the mysticism of love, and because it makes the revelation of Truth dependent on divine grace. It was the Gospel of John that, in the *Consolamenlum* ceremony, was read aloud, from *'In* principio *era* Verbum' right through to
'Gralia el verilas per Jesum Chrislum facla est'.

If one wishes to understand the philosophy of Catharism, it is therefore necessary to reread this Gospel in its Occitan translation (1), in order to rediscover the basic, necessarily 'religious' tenets upon which it was built, and to immerse oneself in the spirit in which the heretics themselves read it

(1) The New Testament translated in the 13th century into the Provençal *language, followed by a* r iftie/ *culhare...* published by L. Clédat, Paris, 1887. **(Sometimes referred to as**: ***the Bible of*** *L'Yori.)*

the sacred text itself. Many passages in John are naturally dualistic, without it being necessary to distort them to make them so. There are others which the Cathars interpreted in a more or less questionable manner, but always in a highly significant way. The difference between 'heresy' and orthodoxy often comes down to a semantic nuance, sometimes even to the placement of the (ideal) caesura in a particular verse.

1. THE DOUBLE CREATION

It does not appear that the Cathars understood the word *'principium'* *(In princi pio eral Ver hum)* any differently from the Catholics, since the 'Lyon Bible' translates *princi pium* as *comenzament {La Paraula era al comenzamenl ab Dieu) *).*

But they interpreted verse 1:3 as expressing an *ontological dualism: 'Tolas causas son [ailas per Lui e senes Lui es fait nienl'* (Clédat ed., p. 155); all things were made through Him, and without Him was made (that which is) nothing (nienf, that is to say, quasi-nothing, negative existence). The Cathars, who thus posited *two creations* (two 'natures') and *two creators,* were at odds on this point with the Monists (Catholics) who, by translating: 'omnia *per* ipsum *fatla* sunf *el sine i pso farmm est nih il'* as: 'All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made', affirmed, on the contrary, the existence of a single creation and a single creator.

2. Lx LIFE AND LIGHT DO NOT BELONG THAN THAT WHICH WAS CREATED IN THE WORD; THAT WHICH WAS CREATED IN THE TRUE PRINCIPLE IS NOTHING BUT DEATH AND DARKNESS

That which was in him was life, and the life was the light of men (1:4; ed. Clédat, pp. 155 and 470, Ri/net). This verse can only be reconciled with the dualist doctrine if it includes, in the text

(•) It was in a completely different scriptural context that John of Lugio (according to Raynier Sacconi) equated *'princ i pinm'* (the good Principle) with Jesus Christ: 'In principio creavit Deus coelum et (terram)' Genesis): ***'In prinoi'*** would here mean 'in ***Filio'.***

Latin, a semantic break after *i pso: Quod factum est* in *i pso* — rif a eruï: 'That which was made in him — was life.' Understand this to mean: '(Only) the things that were made in him — were life.' ' The Cathars believed, in fact, that *other things,* which were neither life nor light, had been made, apart from God, by the *Devil.* And this is indeed how the author of the Cathar treatise cited by Durand de Huesca (°) understands the verse; he states on this subject: 'John said in the Gospel: All things were made through him, and without him was made the nothing (the quasi-nothing). What proves that he was speaking only of *spiritual and good* things is that he adds immediately afterwards: (Only) that which *was made* through him— was life. ' It is evident that, for the Cathars, two kinds of 'omnia' (all things) stood in opposition to one another: the 'omnia *bona*' (the totality of good things) and the *'omnia mala'* (the totality of evil things); and, consequently, two worlds: that of Light and that of Darkness.

The monistic or Catholic interpretation of the verse is quite different: 'That which was made (or, as it is more precisely translated today) — was in him Life.' Or, as it is more precisely translated today: 'From his *being*, there was life.'

The Occitan text *(Lyon Bible)* is not divided into syllables. But the flow of the sentence: *'Co qu'es fail en lui — era vida'* naturally suggests the 'dualist' meaning. A Catholic translator would rather have written: *'Co qu'es fait — era vida en Lui'* (•).

3. THE OPPOSITION BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS

This fundamental antagonism, which appears so often *in John's Gospel*, may not correspond to a metaphysical dualism, but it certainly contributed greatly to strengthening the Cathars' faith in the two principles. 'The light shines in the darkness' (1:5): *E la lulz lutz en lenebras* (Clédat, p. 155). This true Light is

"•) An ***anti-Cathar*** *treatise,* ***the*** **Liber* contra *Manicheos*, by Durand of Huesca...* published by Christine Thouzellier, Leuven, p. 209.

(*) The punctuation used by M=• Thouzellier (comma after /ocfum *esl)* is incorrect. The Cathar would have placed a full stop after *'ipso' {op. cit.,* p. 102, *from* 'omni').

the principle of Salvation, of liberation, which enlightens every *human being (•) in this world: 'Era lulz iieraia que enlumina lot home* mènent tu *aquesl* mon' (1:9; Clédat, p. 155). The light came into the world, *yet people loved darkness rather than light (E amero li home plus los lene bras que la lulz.* 3, 19 — Clédat, p. 160).

Did Christ not say: *'I am the light* of the world' (8:12 — Clédat, p. 173, and 9:5 — Clédat, p. 176)? Whoever follows me does not walk in darkness: *'Quai sec* mi rto *sa en lene bras'* (8:12 — Clédat, p. 173. Cf. 11:10). He came into the world to teach people to distinguish truth from falsehood and to become *children of light: 'Crezelz en la lulu, que sialz filh de lutz'* (so that you may be children of light) (12:30 — Clédat, p. 185; cf. 12:46 — Clédat, p. 185).

4. , THE TEMPORAL WORLD AND ASCETICISM

What characterised the 'perfect' Cathar was that he was aware he did not belong to the satanic world and that he was firmly resolved to withdraw from it. In *John's* Gospel, Christ showed him the path to follow; he revealed his *bondage* to him *and* provided him with the means to free himself from it.

'My kingdom is not of this world,' he said – No *men i'egnes no es d'£iques/* mon (18:36, Clédat, p. 197). That is why the world persecutes all those who wish to escape from Matter. *'But when they are of the world... for this reason the world hates you'* (15:19 — Clédat, p. 191). It is Christ himself who testifies that this world is *evil.* He certainly did not say that it had been created by the Devil, but the Cathars could — rightly or wrongly — draw upon his words to ascribe a satanic origin to it. 'The world hates you,' Christ said to his disciples, 'because I bear witness that its works are evil: *Quar dont leslimoni de lui que las obras de lui so* mafas' (7:7 — Clédat, p. 170).

The Cathars had only to follow the line of reasoning set out by the teacher—

(•) And not: 'And he (the Word) came into the world' nor: 'The true light, which enlightens every man, came into the world.'
{The *Jerusalem Bible* translates: 'The Word was the true light **that enlightens** every **man**; he came **into the** world.')

in a Christological sense to contrast, in accordance with the spirit of their radical dualism, the spirit with the flesh, death with life, Time with **Eternity...**

'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit': *A qtio que es nal de cam en* corn *es; el aquo que es nal d'esprit, espril es* (3:5 — Clédat, p. 159 — cf.: 3:S). God is pure Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth *(Di us es 1'esprilz e aicels que azoran lu i,* en *esprit el* en *uerilal, cove azorar.* 4:24 — Clédat, p. 162).

Christ came to bring eternal life to mankind - he is the bread of life: whoever believes in him will never die: *Dic a vos: que cre a mi a vida durabla. En so pas de vida* (6:5 — Clédat, p. 169). *And whoever lives and believes in* me will never die *but will have eternal life* (11:26 — Clédat, p. 181).

The great Christ-like saying that runs through Catharism like a ray of hope, and which perhaps sums it up, is undoubtedly this: 'Take heart! For I have overcome the world!' *(quai eu venquei lo mon!* 16:33 — Clédat, p. 193).

5. THE SOULS, THE LOST BRKBS

The Cathars did not believe—except perhaps Jean de Lugio—that the satanic operation had corrupted the entire angelic composition (spirit, soul, spiritual body) and had affected the 'Spirit'. It had merely, they believed, separated the souls from *their* 'spirits' by confining them within material (and satanic) bodies. The drama of the Fall, the mystery of the Holy One, affect, in essence, only the primordial principle of the angel who became man. This belief does not appear anywhere in the Gospel of John, but the Cathars have always believed — Bartholomew of Carcassonne (•) as well as John of Lugio — that the lost sheep of which Christ speaks were the souls. Jesus Christ came to earth to save the souls, or rather to

(•) Bartholomew, the presumed author of the Cathar treatise included in *Durond* ***de Huesca's*** **Somme anlicalhare**, **emphasises** ***that the*** **Son** of Man came to save what was *lost* (Luke 19:10). 'I was not
been sent only to **the** ***lost*** sheep of the house of Israel
(Matthew 15:24).

to show, through his example and teaching, how they might attain eternal life.

'He gives eternal life to the sheep': they shall **never** perish ***(E eu*** *dont vida durabla a* for, *e no periran en durable-tal* (10:28 — Clédat, p. 179). *E eu so lo* tiss *del parc* (I am the gate of the sheepfold (10:7 — Clédat, p. 178). *'Eu renytii* qtie alan *vida'* (10:10 — Clédat, p. 178): 'I have come that the sheep may have life.' — 'I lay down my life for my sheep': 'A *pausi la* mia *arma* (animam meam pono) *per las mias ovelhas'* (10:15 — Clédat, p. 179)... etc. For your Cathars, love—*the very essence of divinity*—was the soul of Christ; and perhaps they thought there was a close mystical connection *between the soul* and *love.* Salvation concerns only the soul; it can be attained only through love and in *the unity of love.* Christ's message, in *the Gospel of John,* reveals to lost souls that they must 'gather together' because there is truth, freedom and life only in *communion with God, secured through charity.*

To free oneself from the satanic world, one must hate one's individual life (and even, in a certain sense, one's soul) for whoever loves their life will lose it— *whoever loves his sword will lose it, and whoever draws his sword in this world will keep it safe for ever* (11:25 — Clédat, p. 184). But this is not enough— to be saved, *one must love one's neighbour.* 'Love one another!' The love that must unite men to one another is the same as that which God had for mankind; it is the pledge of total mystical union with the Son. 'Just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you, may *they* also be one in us!' (17:26 — cf. 17:23). *May they all be one!* May they all be but a single being! (17:21 — Clédat, p. 194).

6. LX CHARITY. THE TRUE BREAD OF LIFE

It is well known that the Cathars did not believe in the of the body of Jesus Christ in the Host. Yet they broke bread and ate it during ritual meals, in remembrance of what their Master had said concerning the true heavenly food. On numerous occasions they affirmed that the true supersubstantial bread *was divine charity* itself, or the

teaching brought by Christ (*). The *Lalin Ritual* often quotes the Gospel of John in support of their theory, and it must be acknowledged that the apostle's words in no way contradict them. The true bread is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world: *'But* this bread *is not the* one *that came down from heaven. For there is no God but He who came down from heaven and gave life to the world'* (6:33 — Clédat, p. 168 — cf. 6:32 and 6:58). 'Behold the bread that has come down from heaven' *{Aquasi es lo pas que dissendèc del ccl.* – Clédat, p. 169). I am the bread of life: *Eu* so pas *de ridn* (6:48 – Clédat, p. 169) etc.

Undoubtedly, the purely spiritual significance attributed by Catharism to the Christ-like symbol of the Bread derives chiefly from the Gospel of John.

7. THE SPIRIT

We do not believe that the intellectual approaches of Catharism should be linked too directly to those of Gnosticism, nor, above all, that one should invoke, in this context, *'Salvation through Knowledge'* (salvation proceeds solely from love). Yet, whilst studying *the Gospel of John,* they could not fail to notice that the soul which must be saved is ultimately saved by the Spirit alone, because it brings to that soul the illumination of truth, without which Love could neither radiate nor even be recognised.

'It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh is of no avail' *{L'esprit est lo quals [a vince, la* corn *no profeifa alcuna causa.* 6:13 — Clé-dat, p. 170).

'God is spirit, and it is in spirit that he must be worshipped' (4:24): hence the necessity for man to be born again of the Spirit: *'Unless one is born again of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'* (3:5 — Clédat, p. 159). Unless one is born *anew* ( ), no one can see the kingdom of God; *unless anyone is born anew*, he *cannot enter* the *kingdom of God* (3:3 — Clédat, p. 159).

(*) These are in fact the commandments of the Law and the Prophets, understood in their spiritual sense, which we believe, according to our faith, were designated by these words: 'This is my body'... *(Latin Ritual).*

(•) *Anew* and not from *above.* Perhaps the Cathars found in this verse a confirmation of their rebirth theories

The reign of the Spirit belongs to Eternity. For the Cathars, is always in the future. It is perhaps within these timeless perspectives that John's readers understood the following verses from the Aoanyife: 'From his bosom shall flow rivers of living water... (Jesus) was speaking of the Spirit that those who believe in him were to receive, for the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified' (for *the Spirit had not yet been given, as Jesus had not yet been glorified. 1,* S9 — Clédat, p. 172) (°).

This is not, as we have said, 'knowledge' in the that sets man free, but without the illumination of the truth he could not be saved. A primary grace *necessarily* enlightens 'every person who comes into this world', otherwise they would not even desire eternal life. But, before the coming of Jesus Christ, the devil had succeeded in smothering the light beneath the darkness, *substituting falsehood for truth*, so that a divine intervention was required — that of Christ — to *re-establish* this *truth* and thus show mankind the true path to salvation. Christ said: *'Eu so via e verilalz e* vida' (14:6 — Clédat, p. 188). 'The truth will set you free,' he revealed to his apostles, 'for everyone who commits sin is a slave': *'And the truth will set you free'* (8:32 — Clédat, p. 175). It is therefore with good reason that the Cathars placed particular emphasis on this teaching role of Jesus: on this point, they did not betray the spirit of the evangelist.

It was also from the example of Jesus that they brought a certain unity to their conceptions, which tended to subordinate freedom to liberation through Grace. Man is free only if he receives, in some way, the Spirit of truth.

• 'Receive the Holy Spirit,' Christ said to his disciples: *'Receive the Holy Spirit!'* (20:22 — Clédat, p. 201). But it is only in the world to come, in timelessness, that man can hope to commune perfectly with the divine spirit. Here on earth, he remains in anticipation of its coming.

The promise made by Jesus Christ to the apostles to send them the Paraclete — the *Comforter* who is 'the Spirit of Truth' — is the one that the Cathars most frequently recalled

(•) 'Given'. A probable allusion, for the *Cathars,* to the transmission of the Spirit through spiritual baptism, or 'consolamentum'.

during their struggles against falsehood or satanic illusion ([10]): *'Another Comforter will come to you, whom I will send to you, that he may abide with you for ever'* (14:16 — Clédat, p. 159). *The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all* things (14:26 — Clédat, p. 189).

But whilst awaiting the supreme enlightenment, the 'coming' *{lo meu dia,* 8, 56 — Clédat, p. 176: the coming of Jesus), which will be accompanied by divine joy in all mankind ("), the faithful must, as soon as their spiritual evolution permits, recover *their espríl* (the 'human' spirit) and commune with *the* divine *spirit* through the spiritual baptism which the Cathars called *CORSOlamenl.* This baptism, an expression of divine Grace which protected against evil (1°), and of an illumination of truth which set the soul *free* (*not sinless, but responsible for its sins),* the Cathars believed that no one could enter the kingdom of God unless they had received it (3, 15). Everything the evangelist says about the baptism of the Spirit was fairly consistent (*) with what they themselves thought of *the consolamenlum* (except, however, regarding the importance *also* attached to 'water baptism', which the Cathars did not reject outright, but which they deemed unnecessary). Jesus Christ baptises in the Holy Spirit *{Aquesí es que baleia e Sam Espril,* 1, 33 — Clédat, p. 157) and the baptism of the Spirit is in some way opposed to the baptism of water: 'For John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit' *{Acles des A pôlres,* 1, 5): *Quar a certas Joan balegec* en *ai ga, mais vos serelz balejat en Sant Esprif.* Clédat, p. XVI)...

It is known that the Cathars, in their ritual ceremonies, would stop the reading of *the Gospel of John* at the verse which concludes

(°) It is quoted in the *Riluel de I* yon, Clédat, p. xiii.

( ) I tell you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete *(E-l* rostre *gaugs sra coinplilz,* 15, 11 — Clédat, p. 190). This refers to the great messianic joy, that of the Son of God.

(") I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one *(que-1s gardes del mal,* 17:15 — Clédat, p. 194).

(l•) In the ceremony of *consolation,* or rather in the admonition given to the neophyte, verses 1, 26–27 of John and 11 of Saint Matthew are quoted *(Ritual of* Lyon, Clédat, p. xvi).

encapsulates their entire doctrine: 'Grace and truth have come to us through Jesus Christ': *Gracia e verital per Jesus Chrisl es faila* (1:17 – Clédat, p. 156).

8. M GRACE

Absolute dualists did not believe in free will (God alone can free man from evil). They therefore took to the extreme the idea that the soul is, as it were, the meeting point of Good and Evil, the invisible place where God and the Devil clash, so that human individuality sometimes seems to disappear. When man is subject to the principle of Good — when he yields to the good temptation — he is in God, he shares in God's being, he experiences divine fulfilment; but if he yields to the Devil, he becomes the Devil: he is evil... He watches this struggle helplessly, recording within himself God's victories and defeats, without being able to intervene in any real sense: he is not a participant; he merely endures. He possesses only a kind of intellectual freedom—the knowledge of Good and Evil *(*which *he must, moreover, experience)*—which comes to him from the *very transcendence* of his *spirit*—distinct from the soul; from the light that illuminates every person coming into this world, and above all from the Christ-like teaching *that has shown him the way*. But he is not free to act as he *would wish* to act. He can only pray to God—*if he is already on the path to salvation*—to grant him the will to desire what God desires and to love what God loves.

It is difficult to know to what extent the Cathars accepted predestination. Bartholomew of Carcassonne may have believed in the predestination of a few ('•'). But according to the logic of their system, it would seem rather that they were convinced that all souls created by God are predestined for salvation, or rather that all souls are saved by divine necessity ('s').

('*) Perhaps drawing on John 7:64: **'For Jesus knew** from the beginning who those were who did not **believe**, and who **it** was that would betray him.'

... 'This is why I have told you that no one can come to me unless by the Father's gift.

(") John of Lugio believes that, *through the process* ***of reincarnation,*** all God's souls, the lost sheep, will be saved.

In the Gospel *of John,* the Cathars were able to find support for their theory. Christ affirms several times therein that he does *nothing of his own accord,* and that it is God, his Father, who works through him. 'I can do nothing of my own accord': *Eu no pusc far de* mi *meleis alcuna causa* (5:30 — Clédat, p. 165) cf.: 8:28: *E de mi mefeis no fala alcuna causa* (Clédat, p. 165).

No scriptural text has emphasised as strongly as the Gospel of John the abolition of the individual self in the Great Being of the Son. No religion has established more clearly than Catharism the interdependence of beings and their essential dependence *on their creators* (for they are drawn from their substances). Through his creatures, God suffers the evil *temporarily* inflicted upon him by the Devil; it is through his creatures that he liberates himself and fulfils himself in eternity. This is why the Cathars paid particular attention to verse 15 of John's Gospel and perhaps interpreted it with greater depth than the Catholics: *'Apart from me* you can do nothing': *'Que senes mi re no* podefz *far'* (Clédat, p. 190).

9. THE DEVIL

The Devil often appears in the Gospel of John, not as the creator, but as the 'prince' of this world. There we find the Christ-like assertion—which can, of course, be interpreted in many ways—that the true God is not the Father of those who are carnal. Sinners are, spiritually speaking, the sons of the Devil (which is why mere 'believers' could not recite the 'Our Father', addressing God as their Father). 'You have the Devil as your Father,' Christ said to them, 'and you wish to carry out your father's desires!': Vos *elz del Pa IF€ Diable e-ls desirers de uoslre paire uolefz far* (8:44— Clédat,

But it is verse 8:44 in particular that seemed to bear witness in favour of Cathar dualism: 'When the devil speaks lies, he speaks of his own things (from his own source), for he is a liar and "father of himself". Lo *demon* co *parla messorga, de sas proprias causas parla, quar* mess0ryuiers *es,*
the father of lies' (Clédat, p. 175).

(• The essence of the devil is falsehood. His essential role

is to deceive mankind, just as Christ's is to enlighten them, to be the 'way, the truth and the life'. But the Occitan translation, let us admit, is here just as ambiguous as the Greek text *('pseuslès eslin kai o pater anton')* or the Latin text *('quia mendax esl, el pater ejus')*. It does indeed seem to mean:

'for he is a liar and his father too is a liar'. It is surely not out of the question to interpret this as: 'And he is the father of the liar (that is to say: *of all men who lie)*' — or even:

'For he is a liar and he is the father of it {the *lie}*,' although this construction is not very natural, given that 'lie' *{messorga}* is not given as the antecedent. But we believe that many Cathars truly saw in *Pater Anton: the Father of the Devil.* We know from the *Acts of Archelaus* that Mani was already translating it as follows: 'Since the truth is not in him, whenever he lies, he speaks from his own heart, because he is a liar just as **his father** is.' It is a fact that Raynier Sacconi, in his **Summa de Calharis*,* whilst summarising the views of John of Lugio

{De opinioni bus Jo/iannis *de Lugio),* attributes to him the statement that 'this world is called the Devil, or *rather the Father of the Devil*'. It is also a fact that the Cathars of Dragovitsa were convinced—on the basis of the Gospel of John—that Lucifer was the son of the God of Darkness: *'El dicunl quod lucifer filius Der Tenebrarum esI, quia dicilur in Evangelio .lohannis: nos en palre diabolo eslis... usque: menda:r est el paler e)us* (id est: *Diaboli, scilicet Luci[cri...).* All this clearly shows that, for the absolute Dualists, Lucifer—and all diabolical entities—were the creation or emanation (the

'derivatio') **of the Principle of** Evil, but were not entirely to be confused with it. (With him who was 'a murderer from the beginning'.) However, the two Cathar treatises — which so often quote John's *Üranyife* — do not seem to have made particular use of verse 8:44; and it is noteworthy that the

R il nel Latin, which quotes it in connection with the words of *the Ptiler:* 'Our Father, *who art in heaven',* ultimately interprets it in the Catholic manner: 'We say "Our Father who art in heaven" to distinguish him *from the Devil-Father, who is the father of liars* and *the father of the wicked...*

10. THE END OF **TIME**

In the absence of specific texts clearly setting out what the Cathars believed regarding eschatology, it is difficult to know what fate they had in store for the Devil at the end of time. There are many contradictions to be found in their teachings. The world is eternal, and yet it will come to an end. The Devil is indestructible, and yet he will be annihilated. We shall see later that these contradictions are more apparent than real. Be that as it may, it is certain that the two Cathar treatises that have come down to us foresee the defeat of Satan, the destruction of the material world and its replacement by a New Earth, the reduction of the evil principle to a state of near-nothingness (that is to say, to its true nature) and, in this way, the annulment of its corrupting and murderous power.

The Cathars were therefore able to embrace Johannine eschatology without difficulty. 'Through the exaltation of Christ,' we read in the Gospel, 'the Prince of this world will be cast *out: Ara sera gilalz fora lo* princeps *d'aquesl mon'* (12:31 — Clédat, p. 185). The Cathars taught, following John, that the Judgement had already taken place (the death of Jesus Christ having been the true judgement). 'Because the prince of this world is condemned: *"Quar lo princeps d'aquesl mon ja es jul jalz"'* (16:11 — Clédat, p. **192).**

CHAPTER II

THE CATHAR TREATISE BY BARTHOLOMEW OF CARCASSONNE. — AUGUSTINIANISM AND CATHARISM

1. Even if it were certain that the thought of Saint Augustine had no direct influence on Catharism, it would not be without value to compare the two doctrines on a point where they appear to converge, namely: the notion of *nihil*
which plays a fairly significant role in both. St Augustine was regarded by the whole of Christendom, right up until
the advent of Saint Thomas, as a truly supreme authority. The Cathars — at least those who knew he had been a Manichaean — must have taken an early interest in the heterodox writings he cites and refutes in his anti-dualist treatises. Furthermore, as Catholic polemicists and the Waldensians (') used arguments of Augustinian origin against them, it is certain that the Neo-Manichaeans were at least aware of the famous theory in which Evil is presented as *a* mere *amissio* f›oni. They must have heard, on numerous occasions, refutations of dualism similar to that contained in Manuscript 13151 of the Bibliothèque Nationale, published in 1910 by Charles Molinier, in which it is demonstrated (•), in accordance with classical Augustinianism, that there can be no principle of evil.

(') The Waldensians were well acquainted with the works of Saint Augustine and certain apocryphal writings attributed to him.

.(') No deprivation is separate from the subject, as is evident in blindness and lameness... Evil, therefore, if understood as entirely separate, is nothing (is nothing *at all).* Likewise, no defect of a being, insofar as it is a being, exists. Evil is such a thing; therefore, it does not exist, or is nothing (or is merely a pure non-being) in itself insofar as it is such, unless by reason of its subsistence in the subject, which we concede. And thus it is clear that there is no evil principle, since a principle is something that exists... (Ch. Molinier, *Un texte de Mwatori...* Toulouse, 1910).

2. THE SOLILOQUIES, OR APOCRYPHA

However, at the time when Catharism was developing in Italy Eand in Languedoc, that is to say, at the end of the 12thcentury, an apocryphal work attributed to Saint Augustine had become widespread: the **Liber soliloquiorum** (*), in which the Cathars could discern certain aspects of Augustinianism which, at first glance, seemed to them less distant fromtheir own conceptions concerning the nature of Evil than was the authentic doctrine of Saint Augustine. There is a kind of ideological kinship between Chapter XIII *{De* hoc *nom(fle nihil)}* of *the anonymous Cathar treatise* (*) attributed to Bartholomew of Carcassonne and Chapter V *{Quid sit nihil fieri?}* of *the apocryphal Soliloquies.* In any case, it is not possible to account for the theories of *the Cathar Treatise* without comparing them with those of the
Pseudo-Augustinus.

Admittedly, the *Li fer *Soliloquium** remains consistent with the thought of Saint Augustine and with Catholic orthodoxy: it does not present itself as dualist. But it is indisputable that, in its Chapter V, it emphasises and expands upon the notions of corruption and annihilation in a way that tends to narrow the existing gap

(•) The **Liber soliloquiorum* onimoe *ad Deum** (Migne, *Pair.* xc), which we always refer to in the footnotes as *(Sol. apoc.),* and which must not, of course, be confused with the famous *Soliloquies (Soliloquia)* of Saint Augustine, paraphrases the Church Father whilst also drawing on other Augustinian apocrypha *(Speculum, De spiritu* et anima). At the same time, it presents itself as a compilation of ancient writers more or less associated with Christianity, such as Boethius, and of highly orthodox authors (St Anselm, Hugh of Saint Victor, St Bernard). It is now thought that the author of *the *Liber Soliloquiorum** might be the same as that of *the *Liber de diligendo Deo* (Pair.* XL).

These Soliloquies contain many statements concerning *Nihil* which are almost as heretical as those of the Cathar Bartholomew. However, up to the present day, no one has ever questioned their orthodoxy, and they are cited, under the name of Saint Augustine, throughout the 19th century in Catholic collections of edifying texts.

(•) t/n *Unpublished Cathar treatise from the early* 13th century, *based* on Durand of Huesca's *'Li her contra* 3fonicùeos'... by Christine Thouzellier,
Leuven, 1961. The attribution of this Cathar treatise to Bartholomew of Carcassonne is purely hypothetical. However, for the sake of simplicity, we shall continue to refer to the dualist who wrote it by this name.

between monism and dualism. By contrasting *'niùif'* with *'Élre'*—relative nothingness with ontological fullness—he suggests that there are, in reality, *two* 'natures' *that are antithetical.* It seems the Cathars were able to capitalise on this suggestion, at the very time when, moreover, and on a more general level, they were taking a stand against Augustinianism.

3. For, on the whole, the logic of their system had led them to implicitly oppose Saint Augustine. When John of Lugio *(*Liber de duobus principius*,* 1240) (^) writes, in essence: 'Evil could never have arisen spontaneously from the choice of the creature of the good God, considered as such, had there not been a cause of Evil, prior to it, which could corrupt it and incline its choice', it is evident that, through the beliefs of the 'moderate' dualists of Concorezzo (or 'Garatists'), it is also and above all Augustinianism that he is attacking. The adherence of the creature

The notion that she was 'free' in relation to an Evil that did not yet exist—and the idea of which was present neither in her nor in God—remained, in fact, rather inexplicable: this was one of the weaknesses of Augustinianism. Conversely, the fact that Evil assumed a more or less positive existence, and even attained eternity in the form of an evil Principle, represented the vulnerable point of Catharism. As the dualists were constantly reminded that 'no ontological deficiency possesses being' – *nullus de[ecI us in lis in quantum est, est* – they must have realised very early on that this presented a major difficulty to resolve: ' How *can Evil be made the absolute opposite of Being whilst at the same time being granted eternal existence?*' Yet it would seem that, paradoxically, it was the thought of Saint Augustine—so rich in seemingly contradictory nuances—that enabled them to see this problem more clearly. There is a doctrinal level on which they were undoubtedly influenced by him.

(•) *A 10th-century* Neo-Manichaean *treatise, *Liber de duobus principibus**... published by A. Dondaine, O.P., Rome, 1939. — **Book of the* Two *Principles**. Introduction, critical text, translation, notes and index by Christine Thouzellier... Les éditions du Cerf (Christian Sources, no. 198), Paris, 1973.

4. NIHIL AUGUSTINIAN

It so happens, in fact, that the Church Father and the Anonymous author who paraphrased him also frequently ascribed a certain reality to this *'nihil'*—which for them was Evil—and attributed to *Nothing*

within the creature —a sort of existential content. Everything suggests that it was by drawing inspiration from them, if not by directly drawing on them, that the Cathars developed their own theory of being rendered (relatively) void by sin and corruption.

This theory enabled them to interpret verse 1:3 of John in a dualistic sense: *'El sine i pso [aclum esl* niùif' (And without the Word (outside the Word) was made the (relative) void), since this niùif, this *Nothing*, took on for them a sort of existence distinct from being __ , and, above all, to uphold the reality and primacy of Evil, by setting it, *as a contrary to its opposite, against* the supreme, absolute and incorruptible

.

When Durand of Huesca, in his **Liber contra Manicheos**, seeks to refute the Cathar Bartholomew—for whom, precisely, **nihil** refers to 'something'— he relies on the proposition—which is, incidentally, perfectly defensible—that a *substance either is or is not,* and that, consequently, under no circumstances in scriptural texts can the word *'nihilum'* (nothing) denote an *existing entity,* however 'nihilised' it may be supposed to be. As for the word 'fliùif', it is, in his view, always an adverb; it means:
'not...', and cannot be used as a noun or 'reified'. In this regard, Durand of Huesca is keen to point out that it was indeed a mistake for certain scholars—whose orthodoxy he nevertheless respects (6)—to teach (like the Cathars) that the Devil was a non-being, that is to say, that an existing entity could be both a being and a nothing. To whom is he alluding? To Origen, to Lactantius, to Saint Augustine? Undoubtedly, Origen stated in many places that the Devil was

(*) Some indeed say *that the Devil is* nothing. *With all due respect to those among them who are orthodox, let us* now *vigorously refute these opinions.* However, some say that the Devil is a *nothing.* Their opinions — with due respect due only to those among them who are orthodox — let us now refute them vigorously *{Liber contra Manicheos,* chap. xiII).

nihil (relative nothingness) (¹). But there is little evidence that Durand of Huesca read it. Lactantius's Devil, too, is by nature *reduced to nothing*, and even materialised, but this
The 'nature' *that God bestowed upon him before the* creation *of the world* is not clearly defined anywhere, nor is it described as finite. Durand of Huesca was most likely thinking of Saint Augustine, or perhaps of the Pseudo-Augustine of *the *Soliloquies**. Not only, in fact, did Saint Augustine expressly state that the *Devil was 'nihil'*—we shall see shortly in what sense— but also that sin, sinners and *the idol* (of which St Paul speaks) were likewise 'fliùif', just like the Devil. Pseudo-Augustinus even explains more clearly than his master how the idol symbolises the sinful soul reduced to nothingness by its own corruption. Now, it is curious to note that this 'idol' is one of the figures against which Durand of Huesca specifically — and most vehemently — the Cathar theory of the niùif, without realising, moreover, that he is simultaneously opposing Saint Augustine and Pseudo-Augustine, who employed it *in the same symbolic manner.* Let us add *that* Saint

(¹) 'As for the meaning of "nothing" and "non-being", they appear to be synonyms, "non-being" being called "nothing" and "nothing" being called "non-being"... *that which is* not is identical to that which *is*. Evil or vice is opposed to the Good, non-being opposed to Being. From which it follows that *Evil and Vice* are non-being.' (Origen, Homilies *on* St *John,* II, 94–99, ed. and trans. Cécile Blanc, Sources chrétiennes, no. 120, Paris, 1966, pp. 269–271).

According to M. Dando, the origins of Catharism can be traced back to an early-
of the early centuries as conceived by the Origenist monks; and this hypothesis is highly plausible. In that case, the theory of *Nihil* (existence *as opposed* to being) might have been borrowed by the Cathars from Origen. The difficulty lies in the fact that the 'philosophical' dualism which employs the concept of Nihil in this way did not appear in Languedoc until much later (1210–1220 †).

It is known that the Priscillianists of Spain (4th century) had many followers in Aquitaine. They certainly prepared the minds of the people in that region to welcome with favour the moral rigour – verging on monasticism – of the early Cathar pastors.

There are, no doubt, points of similarity between Origen and Priscillian, but there is no evidence that the latter adopted Origen's interpretation of John 1:3. And if the Cathars did not borrow this interpretation from Origen, via Priscillian, there is scarcely anyone other than Saint Augustine who could have suggested it to them. Furthermore, as we have just seen, dualism based on the opposition *between* 'being and non-being' did not develop in Occitania until long after Priscillianism had completely died out.

Augustine frequently developed an interpretation of John 1:3, similar to that of Origen but more explicit, which, as we shall see, the Cathars could easily draw upon to assert that the visible world as created *by the* Diaôfe ( ) (or at any rate, outside the Word) — was nothing but a quasi-nothingness.

The truth is that Durand of Huesca and Bartholomew of Carcassonne are both 'Augustinians'—but not in the same sort, nor on the same issues, nor within the framework of the same set of problems.

(•) Here is a summary of Cathar doctrine as set out in *Bartholomew's Treatise:*

'... The creatures that can be seen in this world are evil, vain and corruptible. Just as they came from nothing *(ex nihilo) without* reason, *so they will return* to *nothing* (in *nihilum)...* We say that there is *another world* and other *incorruptible and eternal* creatures, in which our joy and our hope lie • (chap. II).

who in the world — or of the world — can be called a 'n tariff' (relative nothingness): the Apostle explains this very well when he says: we know that idols are *nothing* in the world / are nothing in the world (1 Cor. 8:4)... If I have no love, I am nothing / for the Cathars: I am nothing, that is to say, an ontologically devalued being (1 Cor. 13:2). From which it follows that if the Apostle without charity is (relatively) nothing, then *that which* is *without* charity *is (relatively) nothing.*

And John says in the Gospel: • Without Him, *ri ihil* (Nothingness **or Non-being)** was made**. If, therefore**, all evil *spirits* (.)fnfi spiritiis), wicked men and *all the things* in *this world that fall under the* category *of 'nothing'* are nothing because they are without charity, it is because they were made without God. God did not create them, because the nihil (or relative nothingness) 'was *not without* Him' *(John* 1:3) (chap. xiii).

The Cathar view is very clear: there are things that were made apart from God (John 1:3); which, consequently, are not *of His essence* (in *essentia Dei).* They were 'made' by the Devil.

These beings and things—evil spirits, evil men, and all *that is subject to them*—have less being than the incorruptible, invisible essences created by the true God. And they have less being

1) because they are corruptible and, *being* of the evil one, *they* will perish;

2) because they have no part in Charity, which, for the Cathars, is the *very substance* of God. Neither evil spirits nor matter were created in charity (which is, of course, immutable and incorruptible): they are therefore nothingness (relative nothingness).

II. ON THE 'NOTHINGS' OF AUGUSTINIANS

Let us first recall, for the sake of clarity, the three very different meanings taken by the words 'ni/tif' (used as a noun: 'Nothing') and 'niùifum' (noun: 'nothingness') in St Augustine and in the apocryphal *Soliloquies*.

a) For them, and according to the theory adopted by Catholicism, God did not create the world from his own substance, nor from a pre-existing substance ([e]), but from 'nothingness'. This simply means that, to bring the Gironde into being, he needed only an act of his will, and that before the world there was nothing. This creation ex *nihilo* held no interest whatsoever for the Cathars, who believed, on the contrary, that the good creation was of the essence of God (ex *essentia Dei)* and the evil creation of the essence of the Devil (ex *essentia Diabolt)* ([10]); in other words: that creations were of the same substance as their respective creators. On this crucial issue, it goes without saying that the theories of Saint Augustine and the Cathars *remain radically opposed.*

b) In Augustinianism, *'nihil'* is not *the absolute* nothingness that Evil represents on the metaphysical plane. Evil is not an eternal principle: it is nothing at all. In satanic and human souls, it is merely privation, the loss of the Good, **Amissio Boni**. Thus, as we have already stated above, on the physical plane—and to speak in figurative terms—limping and blindness are not entities in their own right if considered separately from their subjects. This very orthodox theory is the one adopted and firmly upheld by Durand of Huesca in the **Libro contra Manicheos**. The Cathars, for their part, rejected it as a worldly notion

([e]) It is known, however, that some scriptural texts do refer to a substance prior to creation. Durand de Huesca even quotes one *(Wis.* 11:18) in his Chapter IV, the significance of which he does not seem to have recognised.

([10]) Contrary to what is so often claimed, the major theories of Catharism have not varied greatly across different regions, over time, or amongst different authors. The belief that creation took place from a pre-existing substance is the same in Bartholomè as in Jean de Lugio: it remained unchanged for over a century, as did the theory of 'evil' universals and the denial of free will.

the most at odds with their system; they did not believe that Evil was merely the absence of Good: *for them, Evil was,* in *principle, an absolute entity, independent of the true God.*

c) Finally, the word *'nihil'* sometimes signifies non-being or relative nothingness. Indeed, in the writings of Saint Augustine—whose metaphysics is far richer and more subtle than Durand of Huesca imagined—this term denotes a sort of 'less-being'. It is easy to see that in numerous passages **Saint** Augustine — and **the Anonymous author,** who merely adopts his theory on this point — refer to nifiif (Nothing) or *nihilum* (nothingness) the evil which, however non-existent it may be in itself and in the Absolute, is nonetheless 'something' in the sinful creature that *brings* it *about.* This ni/tii is therefore not absolute nothingness, but a *proper* niùif or rather, **as Saint** Augustine himself more accurately calls it: a *quasi-nihil.* It corresponds to the ontological state of the creature which, as a result of sin and corruption, has suffered a *diminution of being,* a degradation of its essence. And, naturally, Pseudo-Augustine uses these very terms, ni/iif and ni/iifum, to denote the totality of things thus diminished which *were not created by the Word* (Leon, 1, 3): Darkness, for example, which 'is not' in the Light, Error, Death, and, generally speaking, all privations or negations which 'exist' but do not 'be', in short: the *nihil negafivum* (reified). It is only in this latter sense that the Cathar ni/iif and the Augustinian ni/iif appear to us, if not identical, then at least very close to one another.

6. THE CONCEPT OF NIHIL

Since the entire philosophical significance of Cathar Dualism depends on the meaning one ascribes to the word 'ni/tif', and since it has recently, for this very reason, been the subject of numerous discussions and controversies, we hope the reader will forgive us for dwelling somewhat on these concepts of 'ni/iif' and 'niùiftim', it being understood that we are not relying here on grammatical precision here solely to provide a clearer understanding of the nature of the relationships that exist between Cathar ontology and Augustinian ontology. between Cathar ontology and ontology

Firstly, and contrary to what Durand de Huesca in **Si her conlra Manicheos** (11), the adverb *niùif* is not always used as a noun in Cathar writings. In fact, it is only used as such—as in St Augustine and in the *apocryphal Soliloquies*—when it is placed in direct or implicit relation to the verse from John (sire *i pso [aclum esI niliil.* Without Him 'that' which is Nothing was made). That this term thus denotes a state of ontological rarefaction, a quasi-nothingness revealing itself in the being of the creature, is beyond doubt, given that niùiï is often replaced by the word niùifum, which has the same meaning but is, all things considered, less obscure because it is impossible to treat it as an adverb: *'Nam* per *i psam {morlem) ad nihilum tendimus,* for by this very death we tend towards nothingness' *{Sol. apoc.,* IV); and also because the transition from being to this quasi-nothingness is sometimes expressed by the verb *adnihilare,* which indeed means *to return to nothing,* to annihilate: 'Vae! mihi misero, *folies* anniùifafo, quia tu es Verbum per quod facta sunt omnia; et ego, sine te, *sine quo faclum est* nihil' (Woe is me, wretched as I am, so often 'annihilated' because you are the Word through whom all things were made; but I have

(") Durand of Huesca's objections, which are a sort of reductio ad absurdum, are generally ridiculous and miss the mark:
'If men are evil,' he says, 'the devil, the 'idol', sin and that which is without charity are *nothing* (that is to say, *for you Cathars,* a Nothing which nevertheless possesses some reality), then did Jesus Christ, Son of God, during those forty days and forty nights in which he fasted in the desert, *eat or drink?* This is indeed what the blessed Luke affirms in the Gospel when he says: 'He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and during those days he ate nothing'—that is to say: 'he ate Nothing', if one reifies the *nihil,* in the manner of the Cathars. —
" If the heavens, the earth, the sea and all other things that are visible in this world and which lack charity are a Ztien (that is to say, both non-existent and existent) as the heretics maintain, then the Son of God consumed, during those forty days, all sinners, idols, the Devil, the Earth and everything that is visible. etc."

Durand de Huesca's argument is irrelevant because it is clear that in the phrase: 'Cf. in *illis die bus n ihil* manducavit', the Cathars, like everyone else, translate the adverb *'mail'* as *'ne... rien'* (And in those days he ate *nothing).* But Durand de Huesca's argument, however foolish it may be, at least has the merit of establishing *beyond doubt* that, for the Cathars, the malignant nature was indeed *a creation* which they could in no way regard, ontologically speaking, as *equivalent* to the invisible and incorruptible creation of the Good God.

'made' without You, You without whom that which is (relative) nothingness was 'made' • *{!Soph.* apoc., IV).

Remaining faithful on this point too to the true Augustinian thought,

, Pseudo-Augustine interprets the verse from John exactly as the Cathar Bartholomew does, who states in his *Treatise* that evil things constitute the quasi-nothingness that was 'made' apart from God: *sin, the* torment *of evil spirits...* (The only difference is that Bartholomew does, admittedly, add to these 'omnia *mala'* the visible world, which, for the author of *the Apocryphal Soliloquies,* was not evil in itself, having been created by God.) But both drew inspiration from the old interpretation of the verse that had been in vogue

for so long within Christendom ( ): Pseudo-Augustine expresses this without the slightest ambiguity: **Verbum sine quo* omnia *anni/tifantur* (Sol. apoc.,* VI). Is not the Word, indeed, the Supreme Being in whom, and apart from whom, only relative nothingness, the Nothing, can be brought into being, and without whom all things are and will be annihilated † The Word is the Light and the Life in which *there is no* Darkness, no Error, no 'Vanity' (relative non-existence) and no Death (and, naturally, no Evil itself): *Verbum* in *quo* non *sunt* Z'eneôrae, *Arror, Vanilas neque Mors... Su:c, sine qua Tenebrae; via, sine qua error; verilas, sine qua vanilas; rita, sine qua mors {Sol. apoc.,* IV). It was perhaps by drawing on the words of John, commented upon with such force and precision in the *apocryphal Soliloquies* (which he had no doubt read), that the Italian Cathar John of Lugio came, around 1240—though not without significantly distorting the Augustinian thesis—to arrive at the dualist conclusion

'that *the Darknesses were not created* directly *or primarily by our Lord the true God, but indirectly and, it would* seem, *from a* pre-existing *reality, that of the evil* principle' (*°). Had not the author of *the Apocryphal Soliloquies* shown him the way by calling the Devil the *Father of Darkness? (Apoc. Sol.,* XVI I): for if, indeed, Darkness has a 'creator', it is because it possesses some reality.

(') It was perhaps the Gnostic Valentinus who first and most clearly articulated this ambivalence: 'Without Him nothing was made / Without Him the world was made.' •

('•) **Liber de diobis principiis*,* p. 108 (Dondaine edition). For John of Lugio, the 'manifestations' of the evil principle are, precisely, Darkness, Error and Death.

7. We are therefore still dealing here with the same traditional metaphysical schema, which contrasts positive and fully existing beings *(incorruptible),* created from the very substance of the good God (according to Catharism), or, according to Augustinianism, created from nothing by His will alone, with 'vain' beings, nihilised and corruptible, the sum total of which constitutes the 'nihil'. *'Malum est nihil, quia sine* Verbo *factum est, sine quo nihil est.* That is why the 'nihil' is a *'nihil',* because it was made without the Word, the Word without whom nothing was made / without whom the *'nihil'* was made ' *{Sol. apoc.,* V). This evil (Darkness, Error, Vanity and Death) corresponds exactly to *the Omnia* mala, *nana el* /ransiforia (the totality of evil and fleeting things) which, for the Cathars (Bartholomew and John of Lugio), were contained within the concept of *nihil* (see note 36).

And if verse 1:3 is always interpreted in an ambivalent manner with regard to the meaning of the word 'fli/iif', it is because, in Augustinianism too, it is somewhat equivocal: it sometimes signifies absolute nothingness (when applied to Evil, which is nothing in itself), and sometimes relative nothingness (or quasi-nothingness), when applied to the creature which sin partially reduces to nothing, *but which God does not abolish completely.* In Bartholomé's Cathar *Z'raiïé*, the term **nihil** is used in the same sense as in St Augustine and in the **Apocryphal Soliloquies*:* Niùtf is both a nothing and an existent, that is to say, an existent that is relatively annihilated: *a being of essence* that has lost some of its ontic intensity.

8. But how does this 'nihilisation' take place, and at what level? According to Augustinianism, it 'takes place' in the creature *that has become* sinful under the influence of Evil, which corrupts it. According to Catharism, it has taken *place* from all eternity within the malignant creation: it is, in truth, the very revelation of Nothingness, for 'it is in the being of the existent that the annihilation of Nothingness occurs' (“). The reification undergone

(i•) One cannot help but think of this sentence by Heidegger *(Was* ist *Metaphysik*? trans. Corbin, p. 35). — We quote Heidegger here only to provide a deeper understanding of what the Cathar thought of the 13th century might have been — *mulalis mulandis. Heidegger himself owes much to Saint* Augustine.

Consequently, the word 'niùif', or rather the concept **it** denotes, **is** evident in the passages we have already cited, where we see that the sinner's soul has been plunged on *several occasions* — every time it has sinned — into this 'less-being' in which it found *itself 'annihilated'* (15); even more evident in statements such as this: 'Crim *i gilur [ur* sine l'e, non *fui, sed* niùiï *fui' (Sol. ayoc.,* VI). The phrase by Pseudo-Augustinus: *'Facfus sum nihil* sine *Te'* (Without You I have become nothing) *(Sot. apoc.,* VI) cannot mean, as

Durand of Lluesca would have it, *that denies the existence of any* intermediate *reality between Being and* nothingness: 'Without You I have been plunged into absolute non-existence. ' For the sinner is not destroyed: *he merely falls from the higher state to a lower one.* Pseudo-Augustine, moreover, makes it clear to us what this spiritual failure might entail by symbolising it with a physical decline: 'I was blind, deaf, and insensitive. I could not discern the Good... I could not see *my own* darkness' *(Sol. apot.,* VI). This nothingness into which one falls by consenting to sin—and even by suffering it—actually stems from an *active process:* the existing being develops within itself an *active* nothingness.

Karl Jaspers rightly observed *(*following earlier *philosophers,* such as Saint *Augustine)* that the Augustinian 'nothingness'—absolute nothingness when it refers to evil as such—resulted, in fact, in the creature, from an *activity* directed towards **nothingness and** capable of *actively* bringing about the degradation of its essence. 'One cannot say that evil does not exist, since one brings it about (i•).' **Karl** Jaspers might even be inclined to see a contradiction here, perhaps because he did not sufficiently distinguish between the two meanings that Saint Augustine attributes to the concept of 'motive'. We do not, in truth, believe that Saint Augustine contradicted himself on this point. He was perfectly justified in thinking that the evil one commits does indeed possess a sort of *secondary reality* and that, however negative it may be in essence, it nonetheless

(") Quia toties nihil factus sum, quoties a Te separatus sum *(Sol. apoc.,* V).

('•) **The Great Philosophers: Saint Augustine*,* pp. 359–360. French translation, Pion, 1963. — The great Spanish novelist Ramón Sender, in **The Affable Executioner*,* draws further inspiration from Augustinian theory when he writes: 'When we have the *ronöïë* of evil, it is not that we wish to do something evil, but that we wish to do "nothing", "nothingness"' (p. 318 of the French translation).

to manifest itself concretely. It was indeed the exploration and resolution of this difficulty that surely led him, if not to create a new concept, then at least to reinterpret the old concept in the sense of a reification of 'that *which* emerges from nothingness to return to nothingness', of that which flees through time and falls (") into 'vanity', and to invent, at the same time, an ethical dualism (8) to which a dualism of substance corresponds quite well. Yet this dualism of substance *is provisional, temporal, not* eternal: the moment of fall in which Evil is 'something' truly consists of a malignant spontaneity. How can one express both its passivity as zero and the terrifying power through which it manifests its effects, other than by causing it to emerge as the Omnipresence of Nothing in Time † 'Whilst we descend towards nothingness, *like water that listens to itself,* because, without You, nothingness comes into being; we, by creating nothingness *{nOs, faciendo* niùif) through sin, become that nothingness, because without You we are Nothing—You through whom all things were made, but without whom nothingness was made *' Sol. apoc.,* IV).

9. L CONTROVERSY B RTHOLOMÜ — DURAND OF HUESCA

Durand of Huesca and—what is more serious—his modern commentators have multiplied the misinterpretations in the explanations they offer of *Nihil* and, consequently, by playing on words, *have distorted the true meaning intended.* We must emphasise this: it is not possible to translate *'dos,* /acieHdo niùif' as: *'We,* by *doing* nothing *of the*

(") This idea deserves a lengthy discussion: Christ feels eternal only when he *is about to* cast Satan out of heaven like a flash of lightning *(Luke* 10:18). Whether it be the *'Nihil' that* flows through the 'Transiforin' of *the* Cathar *treatises* (Bartholomew and John of Lugio) or that 'nothingness' which, for Heidegger, 'reveals *itself* within *the existing, causing the latter to slip away and slide away in its* entirety', nothingness is always linked to the *flow* of Time.

(1) 'Some have supposed,' writes Karl Jaspers, 'that Saint Augustine does not teach a metaphysical dualism of substance, as the Manicheans do, but rather professes an ethical dualism which came into being in the world as a result of the freedom granted by God to man, and which will cease at the end of this world, at the Last Judgement' *(The Great Philosophers...* p. 360).

fuck... • ***'Nihil'*** can only function as a noun here, and does indeed denote a reality (however daft one might wish it to be). Nor is it possible, in the sentence that says: 'Through de ath, we tend towards nothingness...' when, through sin, we do not fear 'making **nothingness',** to translate 'niùif *facere per peccafum'* as: '... to do absolutely nothing when we sin.' Yet this is the error committed by Durand de Huesca: he asserts that • 'niùif *[acio'* can only mean 'I do nothing' (l•). He is mistaken; and to make matters worse, as regards the meaning of these very terms, he finds himself at odds not only with the Cathars but also with Pseudo-Augustine and the true Augustine — whom he ought to have reread — for whom 'niùif *[acio',* in certain *cases,* does indeed mean 'I do Nothing' (that is to say: 'I bring about a state of nothingness within myself').

We would not place such emphasis on these subtleties were it not for the fact that a failure to recognise them leads to a wholly unjustified overestimation of Durand of Huesca's argument, which is sometimes accompanied, amongst modern scholars, by a more or less conscious desire to regard any thought formulated by a Cathar as negligible (°°). It is evident that Saint Augustine — the genuine one and the author of the apocryphal *Sophiloques* — understood the quotation from the psalm: **Ad nihilum deduces omnes ycnfes*,* exactly as Bartholomew did: 'You will lead all nations to nothingness. ' Here is the bizarre translation substituted for it by Durand of Huesca: 'You will lead all nations towards nothing. Towards nothing, that is to say, against nothing, that is to say, *against idolatry,* for it was believed that there was a divinity within the idol which, in fact, did not exist. ' This untenable translation does not even conform to Catholic tradition — at least the Augustinian tradition — since we see Pseudo-Augustinus, referring to the same psalm, writing:

(") Durand of Huesca explains his counter-meaning: 'The Apostle,' he says, 'whenever the word nihil occurs, denies, or by its very nature excludes, *a multitude of things, whether material or spiritual, or a multitude of actions,* as here: 'Without Him nothing was made' (sine ipso factum est nihil), OH as when one says: 'I do nothing' (niùif *ÿacio).* Durand of Huesca, *Liber* contra *Manicheos,* chap. xiii. Chr. Thouzellier, Medieval Controversy in *medieval* Catalonia concerning the meaning *of the word 'nihil'* (Annales du Midi, October–December 1930, p. 330).

('•) This is how some backward-thinkingheresiologists maintain still maintain that the Cathars regarded (both)*natural principles* and the two *principles,* whereas one is *being* and the other is nothing/ 1

'Iniquilales meae ad nihilum duxerunl me', a phrase which can only be rendered as follows: 'My iniquities have led me towards (relative) nothingness.

We shall make the same observation with regard to *the idol {Nihil est idolum in mundo).* Pseudo-Augustine gives Bartholomew the benefit of the doubt in advance against Durand of Huesca. The latter states, in effect: 'It is nothing (of what the idol-worshippers believe it to be): there is no divinity in this simulacrum that can be *of any use or cause harm,* as the Gentiles once thought' (translation by Chr. Thouzellier, p. 331). But the author of *the* Apocryphal *Soliloquies*, in accordance with Augustinian theory, on the contrary relates the idol *to the conscious subject,* making it the very symbol of the sinner reduced to nothingness.

'It,' he says, 'has *the appearance of being, but is not true being.*' And he clearly sets out his interpretation in a context where he evokes his own reduction to nothingness, referring both to *the firm memories of the verse from the Quran {Sine i pso [ac!um est* niùif) and to the traditional symbolism of the idol. 'As many times as I have been separated from You, so many times have I become Nothing!... We know that evil is nihil and that nothingness is that which is not. That which is not the Good does not exist (°'): it is merely a nihil. If, therefore, I was a nihil when I was without You, I was a *quasi-nothing,* a quasi-niùif (Qui), and like the idol which is nihil: it has ears and does not hear, it has eyes and does not see, etc. ' *{Sol. apOC.,* VI). These final lines are very important because they clearly show how Pseudo-Augustine — in this respect imitating the true Augustine — *moves from the absolute* 'neaflĩ' *that is evil to the relative 'neanl'* which 'exists' *in the creature through sin. His vocabulary* here *is very revealing: nihil* is, in reality, within the being of the sinner, a *quasi-nihil* (*).

(••) Cf. Origen: 'Evil — or vice — is non-being.' See note 7. (") Bartholomew's interpretations — as they can easily be reconstructed from the very criticisms levelled at them by Durand de Huesca — are ultimately much more in line with Augustinian thought on the question of *the 'Niùif'* than his own. To make the symbol of the idol—the image of the sinner—which obviously does not cease to exist but is no longer at the level of its original being, merely express the truism that it contains no divinity, that it is a 'nothingness of divinity'. He goes to great great deal of trouble twisting the texts to avoid having to acknowledge the truth of the Augustinian theory, *whereby 'nihil'* refers to an ontological absence and not merely to a lack of value, efficacy or

Thus, as Bartholomé will argue, sin does not merely diminish the *moral value* of the sinner: it *ontologically* affects his very essence. Durand de Huesca, as we have said, has no concept of what constitutes the *intermediate, evil creation between being and nothingness,* because this is conceivable only *within* ***a dualist system in which two*** infinite *and contrary principles* coexist. But he should have realised, **had he** been more of a philosopher, that the ontological *fall*, which characterises the evil creation, had been regarded as *possible*—and indeed as actual—by the Augustinian tradition. This alone, in fact, can satisfactorily explain Satan's *mode of being* (whether he is regarded as evil from all eternity, in the manner of the Cathars, or as 'historically' corrupted, as St Augustine held). In truth, *the fallen angel has* ***fallen from the realm of being into quasi-nothingness.***

In any case, the similarities are so striking — regarding the symbol of the idol between Bartholomew and Pseudo-Augustinus — that one must necessarily assume either an influence of one upon the other, or, in both, a recourse to the same source, *which can only be* Saint Augustine himself.

Finally, contrary once again to what Durand of Huesca believed, the Cathars remained firmly within the purest Augustinian tradition by substantialising the 'nihil' in Saint Paul's famous phrase, **which they** quote and translate: 'Si non Jiaôuero *carilalem,* niitif *siim',* as: 'If I have no charity, *I am* but *a fine* nothing' *{a re-created* nothing*},* and not, as Durand de Huesca does, with the following idea: 'If I have no charity, I am nothing (of what one must be to be saved)' (°°)! On this precise point, let us acknowledge, however,

of practical use. — It is known (see note 19) that whenever he encounters the word *nihil* in scriptural texts — or *nihilum* (more problematic) —, Durand of Huesca pretends to believe that it applies to a *lack of moral worth* or a *lack of reality,* or to a failure, etc. He does not want *'nihil'* to refer to substance or essence (non *quoad substantiam vel essentiam).* This *demonstrates* that, for the Cathars, whose views he opposes, *'nihil'* did indeed refer to a *degradation of substance or essence,* and not merely to a lack of moral value.

(") 'The Apostle,' says Durand of Huesca, 'does not allude to the *body* or the soul, which, as we have said, cannot be a "Hien", but speaks of the best path, that is to say, of charity, without

whilst the Cathars distorted, by exaggerating it, the doctrine of Saint Augustine — and that of *the apocryphal Soliloquies* by exaggerating it, in order to make it fit better with their dualist system. It is well known that, drawing on John *(1:*4, 16: 'God is love: whoever abides in love abides in God'), they made charity *the very substance of God* (24), *the* substance *superior to superior* to all other substances, and consequently man's true spiritual nourishment. It was this nourishment that they asked God to bestow upon them under the name of *'supercelestial* bread' {*5) (or *'pariis purus')* in their
. In the commentaries (B6) they provided
on this prayer, the Bons-hommes explained to the faithful that

'in which adults cannot attain heavenly bliss, he sought to show that without charity no virtue *is sufficient for* salvation' (trans. Thouzellier, p. 331). The same line of reasoning applies here: Durand of Huesca rejects any form of annihilation occurring at the level of being.

(") The Middle Ages generally believed that Love —even profane love— was a substance. Even in the time of Dante and the *'Fideli* d'Amore' of *the Dolce stil nuovo,* the question was still being asked as to whether it was a substance or an 'accident in the substance'. The 'Pascalian *order* of Charity', infinitely superior to that of the Spirit and that of Matter, still rests upon the same substantialisation of divine Love.

(2 •) This conception of *the 'Tunis supersubstantialis'* tended to undermine the Catholic dogma of the Eucharist, which Berengarius of Tours (died 1058) had already opposed; Saint Augustine hesitated for a long time on this question, and there are passages in his writings where he states that one does not eat
(the body of Christ only symbolically). Widespread in the yjq e and
jjq}e centuries, Bérengier of Tours's theory had been adopted by the Waldensians: • We believe that the sacraments are mere 'signs' of holy things, *visible forms of invisible grace...* And we maintain that the faithful may be saved without receiving these so-called signs *(/i predict* sepnnf), when they have neither the place nor the means to make use of them • *Confession of Faith,* 12).

The myths of the Grail may also be connected
to the *'supersubstantial* bread'. And when the troubadour Guilhem Figueroa, a Cathar believer, wrote in his **Sirventès* against Rome: 'God, whom I would see — O Christians!* (It is God himself (and not the host) who is the true (spiritual) and daily bread), he shows that he was well acquainted with the theory of supersubstantial bread.

(") • That is why this people prays that they may be
the supersubstantial bread from the Father, that is to say, the *Eucharist,* so that when they have received it they may be found perfect in the sight of their God, as the living *bread* which comes down from heaven shows, teaching them the Gospel and saying *(Matthew* 5:48): 'Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.' •

Gloss on the Lord's Prayer, ed. Th. Venkeleer, vol. V. Translation by Déodat Roché, Cahiers d'études cathares, no. 46 (summer 1970), p. 19.

what it consisted of. And they symbolised it through the material bread which they blessed and distributed to the faithful at ritual banquets. The spiritual bread represented the supreme reality of God, which alone could save man from satanic nothingness.

For Bartholomew, creatures that do not partake of charity — material beings and spirits that are deficient by nature (created by the Devil) *and the Devil* himself — are *nihil* because they are not in Charity. The ontological difference in quality between the Good and the evil is therefore, for him, more absolute and more radical than it is for Saint Augustine. But whilst his thinking here is less strictly Augustinian, it is nonetheless founded on the *theory of the 'degrees of the* Spirit', which is undoubtedly Augustinian, for charity is truly a super-being; it has more being than all other beings.

10. This curious and profound (implicit) theory of the degrees of being, and the — explicit — theory of the degradation of essence under the influence of sin (°'), are quite frequently expressed in Saint Augustine's metaphysical treatises, as well as in the *apocryphal Soliloquies*. Thoughtful minds will see that it is to Saint Augustine (°) rather

(") We shall return to St Augustine's own texts shortly. For the sake of clarity, let us simply recall here the key propositions found in the *Apocryphal Soliloquies:*

1) 'My enemies have slain me... because I have strayed from You and *have become nothing without You'* (VI).

2) And therefore you are nothing, for you are without the Word, *without which nothing exists* (V).

3) The Word through which all things are preserved, without *which all things would perish* (VI)... etc.

(") It is not our purpose here to trace the origins of this Augustinian theory. It has been argued, not without reason, that it originated with Plotinus. It is true, as K. Jaspers has pointed out, 'that on the one hand, for Plotinus, evil is merely a lesser good, containing less being, descending in degrees down to matter, which is *absolute Evil because it is* non-being. But on the other hand, Evil, which was the lowest degree and consequently pure negation, *becomes, as wickedness, a positive reality.* On the one hand, it is merely the shadow of the Good: it belongs to the Harmony of the Whole; it is merely a lack; it does not exist in itself; but on the other hand, it is an active and seductive force; when man submits to it, there is a *second* force within him (K. Jaspers, *The Great Philosophers,* Plotinus, p. 702).

(It should be noted, however, that for Saint Augustine, Matter, *created by God,* is not absolute evil: it is not non-being.)

It was from Origen that the Cathars borrowed their own conception of *'nihil', which*—let us repeat—expresses not merely a moral inferiority, as Durand of Huesca believed, nor a diminution of efficacy in action, but a state of true annihilation. For Darkness, material things, are not merely *less* pure than the Light: they are also, and above all, *less* existent than it; they are not within the being of the Word. They therefore originate, as the Cathars said, from another source which lacks the power to create invisible and incorruptible essences, *and which is itself* .Viftif (or quasi-nothingness). As the anonymous author of *the Soliloquies* states, 'Darkness has a Father other than God, and that Father is the Devil' *(Sol. apoc.* XVII). Authentic Cathar thought stripped of all the nonsense with which it has been obscured from the 13th century to the present day—*but especially in our own time* lies clearly in the tradition of Augustinian thought. Undoubtedly, it has been exaggerated and taken to extremes that the Church Father might perhaps have accepted at the time when he was still a Manichaean, but which he would have rejected categorically as soon as he was no longer one. Let us summarise them:

For the Cathars, there 'exist', apart from the Word, apart from Charity *(subslanlia Der), material* beings, created by the Devil, which may be described as *'nihil'* because they do not attain the level of being. Material creation is, *in its essence,* 'nihilised' because it is corruptible and transitory, and because it emerges from nothingness to return to nothingness. This 'nihil', this nothingness, also appears in the spiritual creature when it commits evil *(necessarily,* according to Catharism, *and not by free will, as in Augustinianism).* Up to this point, notwithstanding this latter difference, the Cathars are more or less in agreement with Saint Augustine; they are no longer so when it comes to determining *who* is *the author of Evil.* It is *human free will* (28)

(") We shall set aside the question of freedom, which is not the subject of our discussion. It is well known that whilst the moderate dualists held a doctrine of free will quite similar to that of the Catholics, the absolute dualists believed that one could only be freed from evil through divine grace *(Libera nos a Malo!).* They believed in *liberation,* but not in free will, which they regarded as illusory, deceptive and linked to the 'invention' of Evil. A Cathar myth suggests that it was in itself a sin: • Satan offers the angels to give them

as Saint Augustine taught. He is the Prince *of* this *world,* the Great *Sinner,* said the Cathars.

11. C THARISUE IS AUGUSTINE ISN4E

The similarities end there. Not only is Cathar dualism utterly irreconcilable with Augustinian monism, but the very notion of ontological degradation is not used in the same way in the two philosophies. Relative annihilation, in St Augustine, affects only souls—which were created good to begin with—and not, as in Catharism, material creation. Matter, itself the work of God, retains, in Augustinianism, *all the positivity compatible* with *finitude.*

On the other hand, the relative annihilation of the sinner has had a

along with the power to do good — which they already possessed — the power to know and to do evil, *if they* so *chose* (it being understood, of course, that they would not wish to do so[1]). It was in this that the Devil was a liar and a deceiver. ' For it is evident that one cannot know evil *without committing it,* nor commit it without becoming its slave and thus depriving oneself of the power to return to Good.

Now, for Saint Augustine too, freedom — which leans towards evil — is indeed a kind of trap. *Man* is *free to choose not to be,* but in order to do Good — this is the essential point on which Saint Augustine opposed Pelagius — *he needs God.* Every individual is therefore predestined either to live freely—that is to say, *freed from evil,* in Grace—and thus to do only what God wills, or to live *as a slave to evil...* There is, therefore, a certain similarity on this point between Augustinianism and Catharism. For Saint Augustine, good creatures are predestined to be good. For Catharism, *all the creatures* of the good God, who are good by nature, are destined to return to God and be saved.

The major difference lies in the very structure of the dualist system (particularly that of John of Lugio). Angelic creatures – for the Fall took place on the angelic plane – could not, of their own accord, have 'invented evil' had there not, from all eternity, been a *source* of evil capable of tempting them and teaching them sin. On the other hand, according to Catharism, all *spiritual* essences, created from the substance of the Good God *and mirroring Him in all their dispositions,* can do only what God has foreseen, from all eternity, that they would do, and what He willed them to do. If God, as Jean de Lugio points out, had given them free will — which is inconceivable — He would have foreseen that they would make misuse of it by virtue of the nature He had endowed them with, and He would also have been the true creator of Evil, for, *to use the* term, He *is the*

beginning. It first struck the rebellious angel sinning of his own free will, then the human soul which in turn became sinful (also of its own free will), so that the appearance of Evil is not attributable to God, but only to the creature, or rather to its freedom capable of inventing evil *ex nihilo*. There is therefore, for Saint Augustine, as we have already said, no 'principle of Evil', no absolute cause of all evils. Wickedness and the partial annihilation it implies are thus always *a posteriori*. The Cathars believed quite the opposite: since they did not believe in free will, annihilation could, for them, only be the work of the evil Principle, the *sole true* sinner, *the sole primordial sin* ( ). Whatever was done without God was done by the Devil. Thus, the malignant creation is nihilistic at its core, originally, essentially, necessarily. The evil spirits raised up by the Devil or co-eternal with him, according to certain heresiarchs (John of Lugio)— , have likewise been relatively annihilated from all eternity. 'It was from the very beginning that they sinned', by their very nature. And if they have sinned, it is because they have always been imbued with nothingness*, *if only through* the *'prope nihil' (nothingness) with which they were in a necessary relationship,* or perhaps because they were themselves an emanation of Matter (as in ancient Manichaeism †). If man 'creates' *God* by committing sin and thus becomes a nihil (according to Saint Augustine), then all the more so is the Devil capable of 'creating' nothingness, death and corruption from all eternity (according to the Cathars), and *is, in fact, nothing but that, by essence.*

Even on the various points where Catharism and Augustinianism appear to agree, it is clear that this is merely by chance and in a completely different context. For example: the annihilation of the soul through sin cannot be total, because, according to Saint Augustine, *God does not allow His* creatures to be annihilated. Nor, for the Cathars, do evil spirits

(30) This is why the troubadour Peire Cardinal (13th century), influenced by Cathar beliefs, declares in one of his poems that 'God *ought from the outset* to *disinherit the Devils,* rather than punish sinful men... Their dispossession would please everyone, and He Himself might forgive Himself for it' (whereas He could not forgive Himself for punishing beings created by Him who have no power to escape evil 1) *(Un sirvenlès novelh vuelh comensar,* str. 3).

cannot coincide entirely with nothingness — even though they might wish to (•'). But this is for an entirely different reason: it is because they are founded on a Principle which, however inferior it may be, ontologically speaking, to the God of good, and however much it itself tends towards nothingness *('Tendil ad nihilum',* St Augustine), cannot abolish itself, because it is eternal. The elements, *as material* and *chaotic entities,* are eternal, just like the one true sin, that manifested by the Devil.

One might almost say, simplifying matters considerably, that in Augustinianism, Evil—*which* is *nothing*—nevertheless manifests its effects upon creatures by diminishing their being, whilst in Catharism, Evil—*which possesses a certain existence*—sees its effects in creatures cancelled out and drawing infinitely close to nothingness without ever attaining it. For Saint Augustine, evil *is* not *nothingness, 'but' something.* For the Cathars: *something,* 'but' *a form of nothingness.*

Finally, let us add that the concept of *'nihil'* does not always have the same meaning in the two metaphysical systems. For Saint Augustine, corruption stems from *absolute nothingness*—that from which God brought forth the free creature, which, having no foundation within itself, may, if it so wishes, tend towards that Nothing from which it emerged. But, for the Cathars, corruption proceeds from *a* satanic *quasi-nothingness*, that is to say, from the evil principle itself, *which* does *indeed* possess *a sort of reality,* a

• *'nature'*. Creation is drawn from the substance of each creature. It is in this sense that one may say that the malignant manifestation arose from *'re-created* nothingness*'* [and that, if it is reduced to nothing, *it is because its author, the Devil, is himself 'Nihil'* (or *quasi-nothingness) {*•).

(•') 'I am the Spirit who always denies! And rightly so, for everything that comes into being deserves to be destroyed. It would therefore be better if nothing were to come into being. Thus, everything you call Sin, Destruction—in short: Death—is my very element' *{Mein eigentfiches* Element} (Goethe, Pan, 1338–1344).

(•°) The Devil, opposed to God in all things, is not merely non-being or 'less-being': he is also *being* without honour; he is • *'Pain and human suffering,* chains *and torments',* and, as John of Lugio puts it: *'Sin and punishment* (self-punishment and torment)...' ' It is not the good God who *punishes* him (otherwise God would also be doing evil); he *punishes* himself (without seeking to amend his ways) because he is • châti-

12. BUT THE CATHAR NILISM AND AUGUSTINIAN NILISM ARE IDENTICAL AND, ALTHOUGH THEY MANIFEST THEMSELVES — ACMANIFESTED — IN CREATION

These are significant differences which, of course, must never be lost sight of. Nevertheless, nihilism — whether it is an original sin, as in Catharism, or whether it stems from corruption through sin, as in Augustinianism — presents, in created beings when considered *in their present state as sinners,* as an ontological deficiency affecting various levels of manifestation, *absolutely the same characteristics.* The final state reached, in Augustinianism, by the good creature who has become a sinner is *identical* to that in which, from all eternity, the spirits and things brought into being—in Catharism—by the Evil Principle find themselves. This is why, moreover, the corrupted soul, reduced to nothingness by its sin, joins *the eternally damned in the same[*the eternally damned. The Augustinian hell is the same *as* that of the Cathars: it *is the place where nothingness burns...*

Thus, one could represent the two doctrines using the following diagram, in which the 'points of arrival' would be entirely similar:

Augustinianism — free will — *a posteriori* corruption — the fire *of the netherworld.*
Catharism — Necessity — a *priori* diabolical corruption — *the torment of* the damned.

The real difference lies in the fact that, in Augustinianism, souls fall into a 'nature' (a quasi-nothingness) that was not originally intended for them (but to which, nevertheless, they were predestined 1), whilst, in Catharism, the demons, by being reduced, at the end of time, to their relative nothingness (niùif), will merely come to coincide with their true nature.

ment • : he would like to destroy himself **because he** is a being. Hell is not *a place of torment imposed* on him *by God: it* is his element (sein *eigenes Element,* Goethe).

13. THE THE **DEVIL AND NIHILISM**

By a singular quirk of history, Durand of Huesca, a Waldensian converted to Catholicism, was led, as we have seen, in the 13th century, to direct at the Cathar Bartholome a critique of the same order as that which the Manichaean Secundinus had directed, eight centuries earlier, at Saint Augustine. Durand of Huesca effectively reproaches Bartholomew *(in *Li her contra* faricàeos*) for having made the evil creation (and the Devil himself) *both a nothing and* an *entity* (and, *above all,* for having interpreted the scriptural texts in this sense). Now Secundinus accuses Saint Augustine of contradicting himself by asserting *both that evil was created by an archangel* (the rebellious archangel) *and that it* is *merely nothingness: 'Quem sua mira prudentia in archangelum faculum memorabile, in* malum *esse* falelur' *{Letter* of Secundinus, 2). Saint Augustine has no difficulty in explaining to the Manichean how evil can be both nothingness and a real being. Here is the picture he paints of the relative nullification of the Fallen Angel. It must be quoted in full, because it clearly highlights the process of ontological degradation implied in Augustine's theory of 'the degrees

of being':

'There was,' he says, 'a certain angelic sublimity which, having taken excessive delight in itself in its own greatness and inclining its affections towards that which was less, *had* less *being*
{ad id quod minus *est),* began to have less being (°°) than before *(minus esse coepit quam era)* and, according to its own degree, *inclined towards nothingness (inclined ad nihilum).* Indeed, the less being a thing has, *the closer it is to nothingness (tanto* oicinior *nihilo esI — Contra Secundinus.* XI. Jolivet-Jourjon's contradiction),

(") But what were these things of nothingness which, before the Angel had become a rebel, were already there to tempt him? Where did they come from, since everything was good? † It is understandable that the Cathars sought to resolve this difficulty by imagining an evil, primordial corrupting principle, the source *of all the fallen,* which would have reduced all or part of being to nothing *from the beginning* (cf. the system of John of Lugio).

14. CORRUPTION AND NILIFICATION. Lx ON ONTOLOGICAL DEGRADATION

We shall not dwell further on the connection drawn by Saint Augustine between corruption and non-being. 'Corruption comes from nothingness' *(ex nihilo est corruptio)*... 'When you hear the word "nature", understand that it relates to God; when you hear the word "corruptible", understand that it relates to nothingness' *{Ad* nihilum – ~~see~~ *the Epistle on the Foundation,* XXXIX–XL). He returned a hundred times to the idea that sin affects being: *'De ficere alium* flonJam *nihil esl, Sud ad nihilum* lendere' – 'To fail ~~is~~ not yet nothingness, but to tend towards nothingness' (Against *Secundinus,* XI). For when things that have more being decline towards those that have less being, it is not the things towards which they decline that fail, but those that decline and which, consequently, have less being than before *{minus esse incipunt quam erant,* XI). Because the creature was made from nothing, it can almost merge with it: 'Hence it can incline towards nothingness *(polest vergers ad nihilum),* namely when it sins, or at least that part of itself which is capable of sinning, not to the point of returning to nothingness, but in such a way that it has less vigour and less strength. But if you push this diminution of vigour and strength to its limit, nothing remains: *'remanel* nier': nothing remains; only *'Nihil'* remains' (Against *Secundinus,* VII I. Trans. Jolivet-Jourjon*)*.

Thus, in St Augustine, Evil is never defined otherwise than as a possibility for the soul to fall completely. 'Against the Manicheans who say that Evil is a substance, we say that Evil is not a substance, but an inclination of that which has more being towards that which has less being *(inclinationalem ab eo quod magis est ad id quod minus est*; Against Secundinus, XII).

We believe that these quotations suffice to show what St Augustine's view was on this point: he took care to summarise it himself: 'The soul is at fault when it consents to evil: it begins to have less being (^{3} *) and,

(••) For Saint Augustine, the sinful soul has less being, and consequently *less value.* The Cathars thought the same: it is

consequently, worth less than it was when, consenting to no evil, it remained steadfast in virtue. It is all the lower on the scale of being in that it descends from what is supreme to what is of a lesser degree, and thus it itself has *less being.* Now, it is, of course, all the closer to nothingness the less being it possesses, and by virtue of having less being, *it tends not to be at all.* Admittedly, it does not reach the point of perishing absolutely *and becoming pure* nothingness *('un penitus pereundo* nihil *sit'),* but it is evident that any deficiency *is the beginning of* annihilation
{Against Secundinus, XI. Trans. Jolivet-Jourjon).

As for the Devil himself, whilst he too is not Pure Nothingness, it is indisputable that he *tends* to merge with it, and much more closely than sinful souls can (*[5]). This is why Saint Augustine was led to define the concept of *evil substance* more precisely than Origen (°).

It is clear that the creatures *reduced to nothingness* by the Evil Principle are worth absolutely nothing. But this in no way authorised Durand de Huesca to consistently substitute the 'nénnf'—the sole *measure of* value—for the 'nothingness *of being'* postulated by the Gatharians, nor to interpret the scriptural texts in this sense—often incorrectly. *Value* is a function of Being.

(•) In Gatholicism, it is God's *omnipotence* that prevents the Devil — whom He created — from merging with absolute Nothingness. In Gatharism, it is the *coexistence* of Being and Nothingness that ensures the Devil cannot annihilate himself and annihilate all things.

(") Origen's interpretation — with regard to the 'nihil' in John 1:3 — differs significantly from that of Saint Augustine. Demons, as spiritual beings, *are the work of God;* they are *in the Word.* It is corruption—under the influence of which they have become demons—which is obviously not in the Word, nor in God. One might think that Saint Augustine held the same doctrine: for him, too, the Devil was created by God. His theory, however, is very different: for Origen, demons — insofar *as they are demons,* insofar as they are not in the Word — are absolute 'nihil': they are nothing at all. But for Augustine, demons are *something;* they assume a different nature. What now constitutes the essence of the angel created good but who has become a demon is precisely that he possesses a *'relative being',* a being that is relative and *diminished,* and not the ontological fullness with which he was originally endowed. It is not absolute nothingness, but *relative nothingness.* — The theory *of the degrees of* freedom is foreign to Origen, at least as a foundation for evil substances. It seems that, on this point, Saint Augustine drew directly upon *Plotinus,* for whom evil is not the

What, then, is an evil substance? It is a substance which has, so to speak, been emptied of part of its being and which, nevertheless, 'subsists'. Although Saint Augustine, so as not to fall into dualism, tried to eliminate from his system this idea of *'substantia mala'* — indeed, for him, there is no evil substance *created by God* — he is nevertheless compelled to admit that a substance *can* become *evil.* 'It is not,' he says, 'in so far as he is a substance, but in so far *as he has become an evil substance,* that the Devil is evil. And he is evil precisely because he has less being than he would have had if he had loved the One who is Being par excellence *(Jura minus quam essel si id QtlOd summe est dilexissel* ... Thus every deficiency of being tends towards nothingness, just as every progress tends towards more being...' (Against *Secundinus,* XVII).

It seems evident to us that it was from Augustinian philosophy that the Cathars borrowed this notion of *an evil substance* (evil because it is partly annihilated). It was *in imitation of St Augustine's* 'nullified' *Devil* that they conceived their evil principle. To do so, it was sufficient for them to 'eternise' and elevate this devalued substance to the status of a principle, rather than recognising that it had become such 'historically' following the *Fall.* The Evil Principle of Catharism is therefore just as feeble as the fallen archangel; this is why Bartholomew calls it 'nihil', following, in this, the example set by Saint Augustine. But it endures eternally *as the root of corruption* (or the foundation of Negation); this is why the Cathars call *it 'Principe'* (thereby opposing Saint Augustine).

Not absolute nothingness, but relative privation; hence a mixture, and thus a kind of existence.

Durand of Huesca, in **Li ben* confrn fnnicùeos*, is much closer to the thought of Origen — of whom he was presumably unaware — than to that of Saint Augustine. Origen's devil, in fact, being *absolute,* as a devil, could in no way become the Devil of Catharism, a relative being. Whereas Saint Augustine's Demon — rendered evil by its corruption — could easily have given the Cathars the idea of a being that was both relative and principled (independent of God) — it is therefore Saint Augustine — and not Origen — who is at the origin — very indirectly — of Cathar Cathar dualism.

15. OF HOC• NOM INE NIC.HIL

Undoubtedly, when it comes to Cathar texts—which are few in number and extremely concise, or perhaps summarised or distorted by adversaries acting in bad faith—it is possible to quibble endlessly over the meaning of the word *'nihil'*. It was always difficult in the Middle Ages — as the example of Durand of Huesca proves — to demonstrate to those who would not listen that the verse *sine *i pso [aclum esI nihil** could mean just as well: 'And without Him, Nothing was made' as 'And without Him nothing was made'; or that: 'ni/iif *[acto'* meant by turns: ' 'do nothing' (for the Augustinians and the Cathars, *in certain cases), and* at other times: 'do nothing'. Above all, how can one make the deaf—and there are many of them, even today, amongst the stubborn opponents of Catharism—understand that ni/tif corresponds to a *void of being* and not merely to a void *of value,* the distinction being one that can only be grasped by a subtle mind. However, as Saint Augustine uses the words 'nifiif" and 'ni/iifum' more or less interchangeably in the same sense, he leaves no doubt as to the grammatical substantivisation to which he subjects the adverb 'ni/iif", nor as to the reification of non-being that results from it. His definition of *'nihil'* is, moreover, very clear: *'nihil est quod ad nihilum* ducif" (that which leads to nothingness is nothing / *Nothingness is that which leads to* nothingness). Pseudo-Augustine's use of the word *'nihil'* also leaves no room for ambiguity:

• *Faclus sum nihil... E ffiiceris nihil* (I have become a *nihil,* you have become a *nihil,* whenever I have separated
— whenever you have separated yourself — from the Word), nor, a fortiori, that of the word *'nihilum': 'Ad nihilum redaclus sum':* I have been reduced to my nothingness. It is therefore only by reference to the Augustinian 'nihil' that one can understand the Cathar 'nihil'. In most cases, the two cover the same concept. This is hardly surprising if, as we believe, the *former served as a model for the latter.*

Moreover, whilst in Bartholomew's **Treatise** the word **nihil** remains obscure in itself, owing to the lack of a sufficiently broad context and, above all, of sufficiently developed theoretical explanations,

the Occitan term 'fleien', which translates it exactly in other dualist texts, is much less so. The meaning of this word, well established by dictionaries, presents no difficulty. Like *'nihil',* it can function as a negative adverb: 'nien podefz' *(ar)*: 'you can do *nothing*'. But it is most often used as a noun and signifies *absolute nothingness* (as in French: *'On dit qu'un homme n'est plus rien dès qu'il perd le souffle'* • He says that man is nothing as soon as he loses his breath' (Uc de saint Cire, XXI II, 12–13) or, *in Cathar texts,* nothingness *is rendered as* 'nihil'.

In the Occitan and Cathar translation of the New Testament ('), verse 1:3 of John is rendered as: *E sens lui es [ail nienl.* It is clear that 'vient' (noun) is translated here *as 'flihif'* (used as a noun) and carries no negative connotation. And this means: Without Him, 'nothing' was made. When Occitans wish to preserve for 'nihil' – or rather its equivalent *'neienl'* – the purely adverbial and negative meaning of 'ne... rien' ('not... anything'), they usually place it before the verb: *'CäF SAS* me neen *podez [*ar' (°[8]): For without me you can do nothing. But the Cathars, to avoid any ambiguity—*a point well worth noting*—prefer to use *'no... res'* in this case rather than 'neien'. Thus, *in that same Cathar* translation *of the New Testament,* the verse from John 15:6 (quia *sine* me oiùif *poteslis [acere])* is translated as: *'Que senes* mi re no *podelz* par.' And if they have avoided using 'gèrent' here, it is likely a deliberate choice, to establish a radical distinction between the 'nihil' (used as a noun), 'Nothing', in John 1:3, and the simple negation 'nihil' in John 15:6; for the Cathar version does not deviate greatly from the orthodox version, and this is, precisely, one *of the rare* passages *where* it *does* so*[[ère.* The Cathar text of Luke, in the same work, likewise translates nihil as *'re ... no*': *E re no mangec ni* hec *en aquels dias {and nihil manducavit in diebus illis, Luke* 4:2): And during those days he neither ate nor drank anything. (Which

(") *The New Testament,* translated in the 12th century into the Provençal language, followed by a Cathar Ritual... L. Clédat, Paris, 1887, p. 153. (••) *The Gospel of Saint John...* published by Peter Wunderli, Paris, Éditions Klincksieck, 1969, p. 11. — The oldest known translation of the Gospel of John, chapters XIII to XVII. It dates from the late 11th or the early 12th century and is likely to be Catholic.

This, incidentally, served to **refute** Durand de Huesca's allegations concerning the alleged inappropriate reifications to which the Cathars are said to have subjected the adverb *nihil* (see note 11).) In reality, just as 'nil if n' is used as a noun and treated as equivalent to *'nihilum'* only in the verse from John or in the discussions referring to it, so too the word 'neíenf", which translates it exactly, was scarcely ever used as a noun by the Cathars except in those instances. Everywhere else it is replaced by 'no ... *res'*. It should be added, in this regard, that the Yaudois — who were not dualists — were careful
from translating John 1:3 as the Cathars did: they rendered it very clearly, in the Catholic manner, using the phrase: 'F *alcuna cosa* no *es [aifa senza Lui':* 'And *nothing* was made without Him'.

Thus, in the light of St Augustine and drawing on the definition he himself gave of 'ni/tiI*' (Nihil est quod ad* naif finn *ducil),* whilst also noting the meaning of the word 'neienï' in texts of dualist inspiration ( ), it is possible to establish with certainty the meaning of the Latin word 'ri/ti'(and its Occitan equivalent: 'neien'/). For the Cathars, these terms denoted a temporal existence, arising from relative nothingness (the
'nature'), and is therefore subject to corruption and change, tending towards absolute nothingness (without ever attaining it) *and revealing it.*

16. CATHARISM: A HERESY DERIVED FROM AUGUSTINIANISM †

The development that led Catharism, through a curious reversal, to adopt the propositions that the *Manichaean* Secundinus had condemned in Saint Augustine, gives a *measure of the* difference *that separates ancient Manichaeism from*

(") We read, for example, in the treatise *by Barlaam el* Josaphn/, perhaps derived from a Manichaean version — or from a Cathar remnant: *'Adonx* yen mi consiriey *que aquesl* monf non *era mays* cant nient e rnrie/nfz' ('I saw at once that this world was nothing but nothingness and vanity'. Translation by Lavaud-Nelli, **Les Troubadours*,* Vol. I, p. 1076). These words correspond perfectly to the Latin terms used by Bartholomew and John of Lucio in their treatises: the world is composed of things *rona ef /ronsiforia*. Taken as a whole, it is *nihil:* it is vain and *futile,* even though it possesses a certain reality and is visible to *the flesh.*

Occitan and Italian *Catharism*. It also appears to establish that the latter — contrary to what is sometimes claimed, owes far — more to Western Christianity — and, above all, to Saint Augustine than to Mani's Gnosticism.

In ancient Manichaeism—which was still widespread in Africa in St Augustine's time —the principle of evil was Matter. Although Matter, too, was, in relation to the Spirit and the Supreme Being, a 'nihil' *in its own right* (the Plotinian 'non-being'), a sort of void, a blind, chaotic, contradictory force *subject to Chance* , it nevertheless presented itself — at least to the carnal senses (40) in the guise of a concrete, active, resistant reality. It was from this eternal and formless matter that the Devil was born. In truth, he was *consubstantial* with it. Eastern Manichaeism had above all seen in him an elemental and bestial intelligence produced by the disordered interplay of matter (41): he was, as the Manichaean fragment from Tuen-Huang (4 *) puts it, 'darkness and folly'. In *the Apocalypse,* the power of evil is represented by the ancient dragon or the Beast. Origen also depicts Satan as a *materialised* monster. 'Of the many beings created with a body,' he says, 'the first of those possessing a body was the one called the dragon, referred to in some places as the "enormous monster", whom the Lord subdued ' (*Commentary on St John,* 1, 96). As for Heracleon, whom Origen opposed, he regarded the Devil as an *entirely material* being from the very beginning, born of the disorder of the elements. Secundinus believed that the Devil had emerged from fire, as from his own element:

'The soul,' he says, 'will join the Devil in the fire from which he was born: *ad* iynem *ori ginis i psius {Letter* of Secundinus, 2). Among the 'errors' of the Nicanian school that Turibius, Bishop of Astorga,

(40) For the ancients and for the Middle Ages , the visible had less reality than *the invisible,* and was of lesser value. It is the *fallible* senses—created by chaotic matter or by the Devil—that enable us to see and touch the world, and that make it *appear*—or create it illusorily against a backdrop of nothingness.

(41) For the Manicheans, as for modern science, matter, though devoid of spirit, was capable of bringing forth from chaos, *by chance,* animal-machines—beings possessing the appearance of intelligence. Thus, in order to retain the luminous, divine particle within its power, matter gave birth to Adam *(Ile plialaia,* quoted by P. Alfaric, *Manichaean* Writings, II, p. 30).

( ) P. Alfaric, **The* Manichaean *Scriptures**, II, p. 66.

Around 445, attributed (rightly or wrongly) to Priscillian, the belief emerged that the Devil is an evil principle, born *of chaos* and *the* 'ïénéôres' (4°). For centuries, it would not occur to anyone to conceive of Satan other than in the guise of bestial deformity. From a more general and philosophical perspective, it was thought either that the Devil had created Matter, or that Matter had created the Devil; but that, in any case, the two were bound by a close relationship of coexistence, without beginning or end. At the time when the priest Cosmas denounced their errors, the Bogomils had themselves, at times, come to see the evil Principle
or in the younger Son of God, *who had become evil* — as the creator of Matter, to the point of equating him purely and simply with it and, consequently, to adopt towards this world an attitude not unlike that of 'materialists'.

It is, we believe, under **the influence** of the Christian tradition that the Western Cathars eventually came to conceive of the Devil in the guise of a Spirit and tended to imagine him—as far as one can judge from the texts
— in the guise of the rebellious and fallen archangel. (Even in **The Secret Supper**, the 'materialisation' of the Devil is *a posteriori.* His spiritual downfall is symbolised by a darkening of his nature: his 'light' turns into 'fire'...) However, making the Principle of Evil a 'darkened' spirit **was** not without a certain contradiction or difficulty. Apart from the fact that the being and intelligence found in a spirit represent 'goods', and consequently — according to Alain de Lille's famous anti-dualist argument — cannot be compatible with Evil, it is repugnant to human reason to admit that a spirit, endowed with luminous consciousness, could be perpetually failing, and eternally persist in error and malice.

Undoubtedly, the theories of being put forward by Origen — and by Lactantius too, to a certain extent — had accustomed believers to conceiving it as possible that an angelic entity might fall in love with nothingness to the point of wishing to obscure its own essence, or might find itself compelled to obscure it. But it was certainly under the influence of the Augustinian tradition that the Cathars made of their

(••) E. Ch. Babut, *Priscillian and Priscillianism,* Paris, 1909, p. 20.

principle of evil a spirit—a flequam spirit (of ontological inferiority)—but a spirit nonetheless.

In truth, there are only two ways in which human reason can explain, *within* a *spiritual framework*, the inclination towards delusion, error and death; these are: either to suppose that its 'intellect', overwhelmed by the nothingness that draws it in, is, as a result, blinded by Darkness *(Ambulal* in *Tenebris!),* or that it maintains such close ties with matter that it finds itself obscured and reduced to nothing by it. These two explanations are not contradictory: they may even be complementary. The Cathars employed both. They reduced the evil principle to nothing whilst at the same time eternalising it, following the model of the Augustinian archangel, proud and rebellious. But they also materialised it in the likeness of those evil angels of the Bible referred to by Lactantius, who, inevitably suffering *'maculalio'*—the defilement of matter—had to take on material bodies *in order to fornicate with the daughters of men.* It was perhaps by invoking the existence of such angels that John of Lugio, in his **Liber de duo bus princi pris** (summarised by Raynier Sacconi), maintained that heaven too had been the scene of satanic subversion and that corruption had spread to all celestial beings—with the exception, of course, of the true God and Jesus Christ. 'Even the stars,' he adds, 'are not pure!'

It is therefore necessary to emphasise that the possibility of a *transition from spirit* to *matter* under the influence of a temptation towards nothingness, or under the influence of lust (which is, too, a temptation towards nothingness, in the second degree), did not seem in any way contradictory to the early Christian thinkers. This idea is expressed just as clearly in Lactantius as, in Saint Augustine, that of the degradation of being under the influence of negating pride. It is not surprising, therefore, that materialisation should have come to be seen as the visible symbol of ontological decline. For the philosopher, the evil spirit, the *subslanlia mala,* is always a void or always leads to a nihil. Yet in the popular imagination, it takes on a material, bestial, monstrous aspect, which is merely the expression of its fall and its degradation.

17. REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DEVIL

It has often been noted that it was in the 11th century — a period when dualistic concepts exerted a certain influence on the Christian West — that art began to depict good angels in the form of handsome adolescents and demons as hideous beasts. Dualism — as Emile Mâle *(L'Art du XIIIe siècle en France,* 1953) and K. Künstle *(Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst,* 1928) have clearly shown — then permeated religious sculpture and painting. We do not believe that the Cathars ever painted or sculpted an image of the Devil. But the only
'literary' description they have left us of the evil principle — which, paradoxically, comes from the *moderate* dualists of Concorezzo — depicts him precisely as a *monster of chaos.* These *moderate* dualists were, in reality and *in secret,* absolute dualists (••). They believed that Lucifer, created good,

('•) We do not place much faith in the reality of *Midi-Gés dualism.* Undoubtedly, certain Cathars distinguished between two degrees in the manifestation of evil. The evil Principle, unknowable in its essence, had corrupted Lucifer; and Lucifer, having become Satan, had in turn corrupted the Angels. But did they really deviate so greatly on this point from the doctrine of the absolute dualists — that of John of Lugio, for example — which also taught that Satan was *not the Evil Principle,* but merely its emanation or creation? The two systems tended to converge. The moderate dualists simply *obscured* the Evil Principle.

There is, however, a difference between these so-called moderate dualists and the absolute dualists: the former generally believed that neither the will of the evil spirit alone — which is incapable of creation — nor the power — which is entirely relative — of Lucifer had been sufficient to bring about the visible world. *They would have required* ***God's*** *permission and assistance.* (No one could have highlighted the ontological weakness of Evil more effectively than they did!) In this respect, certainly, the spirit of true dualism was greatly weakened. Moderate dualism was, philosophically speaking, very close to Catholic orthodoxy. All the more so as it often glossed over the original action of the evil Principle and, like the Catholics, traced the drama of the Fall back to the failure of the Angels (Adam and Eve were, for them, Angels). There is indeed a considerable difference here. But also, let us repeat, insofar as the moderate dualists , or at least some of them—secretly believed in a *principal* cause *of Evil,* they fell back into absolute dualism. And if one accepts—as we hope to have demonstrated—that absolute dualism was both *radical* and *unyielding,* there is little difference

had been seduced and corrupted by a primordial monster, part beast, part fish and part man; and, all things considered, quite similar to the evil archons of Manichaeism, who were themselves lion, eagle and fish—that is to say, a mixture of chaotic, instinctive, animal forces. It was this monster who was the true principle of Evil, the embodiment of Disorder, the instigator of Sin. He possessed, indeed, all the characteristics of a Principle: *he was eternal* (without beginning or end, as the texts say); *he was a spirit,* but a spirit *of evil* (of a bad ontological quality: suōsanfia *mala),*• *it was inseparable from the chaos* that constituted its element, its 'nature'. Finally, although it was eternal (in reality, endowed with an indefinite existence), it lacked the *power to* create, and, consequently, was in no way the equal of the true God ([4] °). It is likely that, for the dualists of Concorezzo, the very monstrosity of the evil principle, and its belonging to relative nothingness and chaos, symbolised the impossibility—as they believed—of drawing a distinction

between the moderate dualism of the moderates and the radical dualism of the absolutists: *two elements which, in reality, are absolute and incomparable!*

The founder of moderate — or rather relative — dualism was Lactantius. 'God,' said Lactantius, 'created Good and Evil *before all things*. He gave the Devil all the dispositions necessary for him to become a rebel and to bring about Evil, because He had decided — from all eternity — that there would be two principles (two 'secondary' principles) so that the world might be a harmony *of Good and Evil* (*Inst. Div.* II). It was therefore impossible, from all eternity, for the Devil to do anything other than evil: he was destined to fall from Good to Evil *(ex* trono *ad malum irascendit).* It is difficult to understand how, despite his free will *(ar bimrum quod illi a Deo li bemum dai um fuit),* Satan could have wished *to do good* and thus oppose the providential plan which required that there be evil in the world. But the most serious flaw in his system is that God remained the true author of evil (an evil which, it is true, contributed to a certain divine order). The moderate dualism of the Bogomils, in which Christ and Lucifer are

• 'the two sons of God' does not differ greatly from that of Lactantius. But it was impossible for bold minds — in Bulgaria as in Occitania — not to see the weak point in Lactantius's theory or in similar theories and did not make evil an absolute and autonomous principle, in order to relieve God of all responsibility for the creation of evil (for He would have 'created' it if He had merely permitted it). (•[6]) Quidam *riequam* spiritus... huit sine *principio* et manebat in ?ioe *chaos* nullam habens *poleslatem creandi* (Ch. Molinier, *Un texte de Muralori,* Toulouse, 1910, p. 31. — cf. also Moneta and Söderberg's interpretations). This monster bears a strong resemblance to the fiery monster of the *'Secret Gene',* towards which Lucifer descends once more and which is his own *principle.*

higher and more distinct than those possessed by even the most cruel and cunning of animals (the *Draco* of the *Apocalypse* or *the Ancient Serpent).* The animal form attributed to it by the Cathar imagination (in the *Commentaries on the Paler,* for example) was merely a way of making tangible the condemnation with which all good spirits agreed to brand the demon, especially since Saint Augustine had dared to conceive of the existence *of a* corrupted *spiritual substance* surviving *forever* as such, following its fall.

18. OCCITAN CATHARISM IN THE YEARS 1220–1230

It seems that, in the course of its doctrinal development, Catharism made a serious philosophical effort — from Bartholomew to John of Lugio — to refute the Catholic arguments which maintained that, since existence is a Good, Evil, if it existed, could be neither absolute nor primary. It appears that it was between 1220 and 1230 ('•) — and *perhaps* only in *Occitania* (Languedoc and the County of Foix) — that the nature of the evil principle was interpreted in the light of the annihilation to which Saint Augustine had subjected the substance of the rebellious archangel. Bartholomew's **Tvailé calhare** must date from 1218–1220 (it was around this time — approximately — that the *apocryphal *Soliloques** spread throughout the West*).* Undoubtedly, for Saint Augustine, Lucifer had not become the absolute opposite of being: he merely tended towards nothingness. Nor, for the Cathars, was the evil Principle nothingness. (If the devil were pure nothingness, there would be no dualism!), but they could argue, not without reason, that evil opposes Being more truly by being 'something' than by being nothing at all, provided that this 'thing' remained chaotic, actively embodied Negation, and tended desperately — *in the* wrong way — towards non-being and destruction.

(••) 'All the **Cathars held on** to the **same** "ancient" beliefs' from **1200 to 1230, writes** Raynier **Sacconi** (in 1250). It does indeed appear that Catharism **evolved** in a more philosophical direction, in Occitania as early as 1220 (†), with Bartholomew; and in Italy, with John of Lugio, around 1230 or later.

Naturally, it is not possible that the Occitan Cathars of 1220–1230 (approximately) could have regarded the two principles as *equal* in *power* and *value*. Bartholomé is careful to point out that the God of Good is *summus ac verus* **el** *Omni-polens,* whereas the Devil is none of these things. His dualism contrasts a true God—almighty in being and in goodness, and whom one must love—with a false god (°7) who is powerful only in evil and whom one must hate; the God who created the *incorruptible* world, *and* the Devil who created the corruptible world. For his part, John of Lugio states unequivocally that God is the only true being, most holy, most good, most pure, etc., all-powerful in Goodness, whilst the other is *a lie, error, false power,* etc. Although certain historians—obstinate and ignorant opponents of Catharism—still persist, out of ignorance or bad faith, in speaking of 'the two *equal* principles of Catharism', there is no doubt that for the 'Occitan heretics' the God of Good prevailed in *essence, wisdom, power and* [illegible] (which is essentially different from the chaotic and indefinite Duration of evil) over the evil God. If the heresiologists were to concede this would constitute a minimum of objectivity on their part in using the vocabulary of the 'heretics' they are studying, ~~ra~~ther than that of the 'inquisitors'; if they were to call the ~~g~~ood principle *the True God,* in the manner of the Cathars, perhaps they would find it more natural, and no doubt more 'scientific', not to make the other

the False ~~O~~ne his 'equal'... —

In truth, in ancient Manichaeism as in the Catharism of John of Lugio, the God of Good even possesses an additional measure of 'superiority' (which is generally passed over in silence). As he is a superabundance of being, the true God *can increase the ontological intensity of the Good* to any degree he wishes: it is in this that he is *omni potens,* all-powerful in Goodness. It is thus that he was able to make Jesus Christ sinless and

(") The notion of a 'false god' had even spread into Western folklore — and as far as Catalonia, a region where Cathar dualism had never really taken root. We read in a magic formula to ward off evil spirits: 'The Good Lord, Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint Còme, Saint Damien — all set off along the path where they meet the "false god" *(lo [uls* deu)' (Hélène Avril-Fabre, *'Popular Magical Cures in* Provence'. Folklore, vol. 1070, p. 16)—

to serve as the ideal model to be emulated by all men who aspire, like him, to attain the divine fullness of being. And just as in Catholicism the saints in Paradise are confirmed in grace and can never sin again, **so too,** in Catharism, souls that have been thus transformed can never again fall back into evil. At the end of time, the inequality that reigns between the two 'natures' will be even more pronounced, since — with the world of the Mixture disappearing — matter and its manifestations will be reduced to themselves — that is to say, to chaos — and rendered incapable of harming the good and of renewing their aggression against the Being. This, in fact, **could** only **have taken** place once, and it cannot be repeated, as the 'saved creatures' are now united with the true Being (••). Whilst it is true that the originality of Occitan Catharism in the years 1220–1230 lies chiefly in the novel use it made of Augustinianism — by pitting Saint Augustine against Saint Augustine, *the theory of the 'deyrés' of Being against the theory of evil — Amissio* honi (it is curious to note that the Cathars Bartholomew and Durand of Huesca both employ Augustinian arguments against one another — though not the same ones, of course) —, it must be recognised *ipso facto* that it is entirely rooted in the Christian Tradition. Indeed, there is nothing in it that could not have been drawn from the Gospel of John, from certain scriptural texts, from the works of Origen and Lactantius and, more specifically, from those of Saint Augustine. As regards its interpretation of nihil, Catharism even appears **as a heresy** *stemming indirectly from* Auyusfinism.

We have little information about the early days of Catharism in Languedoc. It may originally have been inspired by a form of

(") This did not prevent Salvo Burci (1235) from attributing to the Cathars of his time, in the **Supra stella**, the idea that the two principles were 'equal in power, wisdom and skill, one in good, the other in evil'... It is clear that if this were the case, 'no peace could be established between the souls of the good god and those of the evil god: hostilities would resume ceaselessly'. And such dualism would be absurd... However, neither the Occitan Cathars nor John of Lugio maintained that the Principles were equal in power, wisdom, etc. In fact, they stated time and again exactly the opposite.

a rudimentary and distorted form of dualism, or one that is childishly realistic (the sort that Salvo Burci might rightly have ridiculed). And even the absolute dualism that spread throughout Occitania under the influence of Nicetas, following the *Council of Caraman* (1167 or 1172), may well have been reduced, too, to a very primitive schema pitting two antagonistic and 'equal' gods against one another, that is to say, both participating to the same degree in being. This was contradictory, for if Evil possesses the same being as the true God, it is not entirely evil, since **the being it possesses is** Good.

To our knowledge, the theory which regards the entire malignant nature as *a 'Nihil'* was formulated in its philosophical abstraction only within Cathar circles in the counties of Toulouse and Foix. Should Bartholomew of Carcassonne be credited with having introduced it there? It would be difficult to prove. What is certain is that this Dualism, which arose at a time when the influence of *the apocryphal Soliloquies* was being felt in the West, remained *more or less unchanged* from Bartholomew (1220) to Pierre Authier (died 1311), and that it never ceased to be practised in the County of Foix, which would suggest that it had been *taught* there without interruption.

This new dualism is clearly distinguished from ancient Manichaeism and Bogomilism. Bogomilism undoubtedly remains at the root of Occitan and Italian Catharism. The similarities between the two metaphysical systems are undeniable. It is known that the Bogomils never conceived of the two principles or the entities that symbolised them, which were, moreover, most often regarded as
'secondary principles' derived from a single creator as equals, nor, even less so, the 'natures' created by them as having equal value. But it must be acknowledged that they never spoke of the relative annihilation of the Devil. It seems they were unfamiliar with the *Theory of the Degrees of Being,* or, if they were familiar with it, they did not feel it necessary to make use of it.

It is also a fact that, whilst in John of Lugio the inferiority of Evil does indeed result—as it does for all Cathars—from the false and deceitful nature of its manifestations *(vana el lransiloria),* from the 'vanity' of its corrupting action, and from its eternal slipping through time, this is never

explicitly linked to the *'nihil'* of John 1:3, nor with the concept of 'nihil' as it appears in Bartholomew and in many accounts by later heretics (early 14th century) (^°), who describe this world as 'nothingness'. Yet John of Lugio is careful not to make the Devil the 'equal' of the true God. He attributes to the evil principle 'iotios' what Saint Augustine — and Bartholomew — *associate with the* notion *of 'Nihil': darkness, death, error, falsehood (omnia mala):* one is all the more astonished to see that he ignored — like the Bogomils — the theory of the degrees of being and the Augustinian definition of *'substantia mala',* which would have enabled him to provide an absolute — negative — foundation for the vanity of this world and for the illusory nature of material appearances ('°).

Thus, it is only in 12th-century Occitan Catharism that one finds clearly expressed the profound idea that evil universals are non-existent and that, ultimately, what separates Evil from Good is that the former is not situated on the same ontological level as the latter; that is to say, *Evil has* inherently *less being than Good.* This is sufficient to distinguish it from Bogomil dualism and the dualism of John of

(") In Bishop Fournier's Inquisition Register there is a brief dialogue between a Catholic and the Cathar minister Pierre Autier, which sheds perfect light on the matter. The Catholic has just said, quoting the Gospel of John: 'All things *(omnia)* were made through Him, and without Him, nothing *(nihil)* was made.' ' Autier, for his part, replies: 'No! All things were made through Him (omnia *per* ipsum *[acta* sunt]), but also: "All things were made without Him — apart from Him" (omnia ex eo [acta *sunt sine eo).* It is clear that, in the second clause, Autier replaces *'nihil'* with 'omnia (mala)' so that 'Et sine ipso factum est nihil' (And without Him was made Nothing (or relative nothingness)) is explained and elaborated as follows: 'Without Him was made Nothing': that is to say,

'the totality *of evil things'* (omnia mala). Pierre Autier therefore seeks here, *in accordance with Bartholomew's own* doctrine, to set in opposition the two universals: the totality of good things created by the Word (omnia *bona)* and the totality of evil things (omnia mala) created outside the Word, by the Devil. For the Occitan Cathars of the County of Foix, *n* ***ihil*** — omn *ta mala* | omnia *mala* — *ri* ***ihil,*** *a formula to which* Saint *Au gusl in might well have subscribed (Re qislre* d'Znqiiisiïion *by Bishop* ***Fournier,*** ed. Duvernoy, vol. II, pp. **213–214).**

(s°) In the treatise *Contra *Garalenses*, he even seems to accept the Catholic interpretation of the verse from John: 'All things were made through Him, and nothing that was made was made without Him' (ed. Dondaine, p. 134).

Lugio, and to specify it in relation to them. The latest, *most developed form of* Occitan dualism is both *absolute* (radical) and *inepaphilial.*

19. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THIS DUALISM

Cathar dualism—*absolute* as regards the eternity of the two principles, but *relative* as regards their respective importance (has there ever, for that matter, been any soft dualism concerning Value? Did not even ancient Manichaeism itself foresee the final victory of Good over Evil?) thus represents a doctrine intermediate between Augustinian monism and Manichaean dualism. *This is its primary philosophical purpose.* Malignant nature is presented here as a realm of reality occupying the middle ground between the *incorruptible* divine manifestation and the formless, chaotic, unconscious and violent matter of Manichaeism.

Whatever Durand of Huesca may have thought, this malignant creation—which extends from an *initial* nothingness *to a final nothingness*—necessarily has less being than the eternal essences; but, contrary to what many modern heresiologists maintain, it has *less reality* than the Manichaean *Matter*: it is quasi-illusory and quasi-non-existent. For the Manichaeans, evil was a kind of substance; for Catharism, it is neither absolute nothingness nor a substance, but a 'relative nothingness' which reveals itself in being and enters into composition with it in existing things (•'). For Saint Augustine, evil is 'an *intrusion of that* which *has being into that which has* less *being*'. For the Cathars as well: but this decline is caused by a Principle which, by nature, eternally and necessarily has *less being than the God of Being. This is its second philosophical originality.*

In this respect, Catharism, by admitting the existence of an eternal root of evil, does not merely respond to

(") One cannot help but think here — although it is, of course, set in a completely different context — of Heidegger's assertion:
'Nothingness does not remain the indeterminate opposite of the existing, but reveals itself as a constituent of the being of that existing' *(What is Metaphysics?*, trans. from the German by Henry Corbin, 1938).

the objection that all sound minds have raised against monotheism since Bayle—whose **arguments are too well known** for us to repeat them here; since the very orthodox Legrand *{De exislenlia Der),* who wrote, at the end of the 18th century: 'I acknowledge that it is difficult to explain how a supreme, unique, all-good, almighty being has not removed from the world—which he founded, ordered and sustains—all evils: all evil inherent in sin and all evil inherent in punishment, which is added to the evil of sin' — right up to Messrs Jolivet and Jourjon themselves, who do not fail to ask, with regard to the Augustinian thesis: 'Why, in the Being who is good, is there this tendency towards nothingness?' *(St Augustine, Works* 17, p. 532). Catharism also, and above all, responds to the objection raised by monotheists against dualists, namely: that it is contradictory to posit *two supreme Beings* within the Absolute. For, by asserting that there exists, in contrast to the immaterial and incorruptible creation, a 'nature' which is absolutely *its opposite* in terms of being, it succeeds in weakening — if not nullifying — the force of the arguments put forward by Alain of Lille and Saint Augustine, according to which the presence in the world of an eternal root of Evil is inconceivable.

The *third philosophical innovation* of Catharism lay precisely in demonstrating that **the world** of manifestation is **prey to nothingness and** that, whilst it is possible for the being **of a** creature to undergo, *historically* but *not forever,* the invasion of nothingness, it is not inconceivable that a demonic being should undergo it from all eternity and in its very essence.

Nature reduced to nothingness, whose characteristics St Augustine had defined in ontological terms, is no longer merely, in Catharism, a temptation towards nothingness: it is also the unknowable cause of all negation (5•). It is in this capacity, as something *so* close *to nothingness*, that it is possible for an entity to exist without completely annihilating itself. Undoubtedly, this ultimate nothingness can only be revealed through the slippage of every existing thing from one nothingness to another. And what the Cathars called the 'vain and transitory world' *(vana el lransiloria)* consists precisely in the flight of manifestation within its

(••) • It is nothingness that is the origin of negation, and not the other way round •
(Heidegger, ***Was ist Metaphysik**?* Trans. Corbin, p. 37).

whole — time being merely the measure of nothingness — and by the negation of all things in all things. But this 'negative nothingness', as we have said above, is more the opposite and the enemy of being than *'nihil absolulum',* which is nothing at all.

The Devil lives his own substantial lie. It is because he is in himself *error,* contradiction and impossibility that he is condemned to attain, only through the being he hates, that nothingness which he ceaselessly pursues and manifests, but with which he never coincides.

It follows from all that we have just said that 13th-century Occitan Catharism must henceforth take its place in the history of medieval philosophy — and of Occitan thought — with its distinctive characteristics, which have all too often been overlooked and which may be summarised as follows.

1. It belongs, for the most part, to the Christian Tradition. It owes its general approach (as regards ontology) to Saint Augustine.

2. By making the ontological plane and the moral plane coincide absolutely, this dualism does not merely oppose matter to Spirit, nor Evil to Good, but first and foremost nothingness *to being.*

3. It is *absolute* and *inescapable.* The root of evil is eternal and independent of the true God, yet it is as though 'annihilated' in His presence: it exists but is not. The two principles are therefore neither 'equal' nor equivalent. One is the Supreme Being; the other is the unfathomable depth of nothingness in which negation finds its foundation.

4. It is above all through its theory of *nihil* that Occitan Catharism remains highly modern and difficult to refute. This is why, in the Middle Ages (as today), its opponents chose to combat it not on the basis of its authentic doctrine, but through the caricature they created of it—and which they still create—whether in good or bad faith.

CHAPTER III

THE METAPHYSICS OF JEAN DE LUGIO: *THE TRUTH OF THE TWO PRINCIPLES*

Whilst around **1220–1225** (perhaps earlier) absolute Dualism took on a more philosophical orientation in Languedoc with the *treatise of* the same name, a similar phenomenon occurred in Italy: the **Book of the Two Principles**, discovered by the Reverend Father Dondaine and published in 1939, marks a clear desire to rationalise traditional Dualism. The *Book *of the Two Principles** reflects, to a certain extent, the theories of John of Lugio, the content of which we know only through a brief summary provided by Raynier Sacconi in the **Summa de Calharis**. The *Languedoc-Catalan Treatise* is influenced above all by Saint Augustine and the Augustinian apocrypha, whilst the philosophy of Jean de Lugio and the *Book of the Two* Principles are influenced by Aristotelian thought and Catholic theology. It is evident that Catharism, which, as Raynier Sacconi states, had remained virtually unchanged from around 1200 to 1230–1240, underwent considerable transformations precisely between 1220 and 1260 — in Languedoc as well as in Italy. It is difficult to understand what could have led Arno Borst to write that Catharism had become less philosophical from that date onwards. It was exactly the opposite that occurred. And this is easily explained by the general progress of theological studies, by the influence of Catholic scholarship, from which the Cathars

repeatedly drew upon for knowledge, by the necessity

need, finally, for the absolute Dualists to respond 'philosophically' to the arguments used against them by the

Catholics, the Waldensians and the moderate Dualists. The author of *the Languedoc Treatise* endeavoured to reconcile his views with scriptural texts and to establish, on the basis of *the Gospel of* John, a principled yet unequal dualism; this was countered by Jean de Lugio, who sought, in an Aristotelian spirit, the often confused mythology of the 'Albanenses', by clarifying the nature of the interaction between the two principles; and that of his disciple, the author of the *L*irre des deux* principes* — to narrow, in a manner that is, moreover, highly artificial, the gap separating heterodoxy from orthodoxy. As we do not know whether other works of the same kind existed in the period between 1200 and 1240, we cannot make any assumptions about the chronological development of Cathar philosophy. But by *necessity,* it boils down to three works — which, for that very reason, take on great significance, not only in the history of Cathar thought, but also in that of Western Dualism, of which

they are the sole surviving examples: the *Languedoc Treatise* by Bartholomew, the (lost) *Treatise* by John of Lugio and the *Book of the Two Principles,* all three *of which* are philosophically oriented and exhibit the highly remarkable feature that the mythical fantasies, which the early dualists had, it seems, overused, have virtually disappeared from them.

One must not exaggerate the differences between, on the one hand, ancient and modern Dualism, and, on the other, between the three treatises. It is the very nature of a rigid doctrine such as absolute Dualism that it cannot be distorted to any great extent. Provided that the two Principles are equally eternal, that they must be of *contrary* nature, and that only one of the two is the true God (to whom Glory and Power belong for ever), all the characteristics of both are almost necessarily deduced from these basic postulates. Raynier Sacconi points out, moreover, that whilst John of Lugio did invent new theories and rendered others 'worse', he also retained some that belonged to the common body of thought. He does not tell us which ones, but it is reasonable to assume that they were the most general and the most important (from our point of view). Most of the ideas espoused by the Balazinenses and the Albanenses: the existence *of* ***the*** *two* ***principles***.

The battle with Saint Michael in heaven, the *theory of reincarnation,* the eternal existence *(or, more precisely, the* indefinite *duration*) *of the world, the denial of free will,* and many others listed by Sacconi are found in the lost book by John of Lugio (as summarised in the *Summa de Calharis).* We shall see that Jean de Lugio and the author of *the *Liber de duobus principis** clarified the concept of ‘creation’ (which is never creation *ex *nihilo**, but ‘formation’, from a pre-existing nature); attempted to demonstrate more clearly the impossibility of free will; and, finally, modified the respective roles of the two Principles, extending the effects of corruption to the celestial world… But all this was already present in the earlier body of ‘mythical’ Catharism.

Not only do the theories of John of Lugio and those of the anonymous author of *the *Book of the Two Principles** (who may have been his disciple) not diverge too greatly, in essence, from those of the early Albanians and Balazinians (their differences concern only details or dogmatic points that are entirely secondary in our view), but they are in perfect agreement with those of the Languedoc Cathars of 1230. Bartholomew of Carcassonne believes, like John of Lugio, that creation is, in reality, a ‘way’ that always operates on the basis of a pre-existing substance; like him, he distinguishes between the *‘omnia bona’* and *the ‘omnia mala’* (the totality of ‘good’ things as opposed to the totality of ‘bad’ things); and, like him, he believes that the ‘omnia *mala’* are relatively ‘nullified’ and are, in any case, transitory and vain elements *{lransiloria and* nana). As free will has always been rejected (often, moreover, as a satanic trap) by all the absolute Languedoc dualists, it is almost certain that Bartholomew, although he does not mention it, rejected it just as they did and just as Jean de Lugio did. We shall say the same of the theory—so important—of reincarnation, which he also does not mention, but which was then adopted by all the Cathars of Languedoc. Finally, the ontological inferiority of the Evil Principle is also emphasised in both *Treatises,* although, in Jean de Lugio’s work, it does not have the same causes or the same characteristics as in Bartholomew’s.

We must therefore acknowledge that the *Languedoc Treatise, the* by Jean de Lugio, and the **Book of the Two Principles** are not

contingent developments of Catharism, or aberrant forms that may have developed, more or less artificially, from an ancient body of thought regarded as the sole authentic source, or as the more authentic one: on the contrary, they are the logical and necessary culmination of the Doctrine. Nothing could be further from the truth than to describe Jean de Lugio's philosophy, as an Italian heresiologist felt compelled to do, as:

'A minor heresy within the Heresy.' The *Languedoc Treatise,* the work of John of Lugio, and, to a lesser extent, the **Treatise** *on the Two Principles* — which chance has preserved for us — represent a deepening — and the continuation — of traditional Dualism, of which they preserve all the philosophical characteristics. They correspond to the two general directions—not mutually exclusive, but complementary—which Languedoc Catharism and Italian Catharism had to follow in order to survive and defend themselves dialectically. One can certainly imagine that others existed, very different in detail, but it is hard to conceive of a way to legitimise absolute Dualism that would deviate radically from that set out in our two treatises.

JEAN DE LUGIO

The Absolute Dualists of Italy, known as the Albanians (either because their founders are said to have come from Albania, or rather because one of their bishops was called Albanus), had established their main church in Desenzano, on the shores of Lake Garda, in the **13th** century. Around 1230, Jean de Lugio, from Bergamo, broke away from Belesmanza, Bishop of Verona, of whom he was the 'eldest son' (coadjutor and designated successor), thereby causing a sort of doctrinal schism within the church at Desenzano. The older members remained faithful to Belesmanza's absolute dualism, whilst the younger members adopted the dualism of Jean de Lugio, which was no less absolute but less 'mythical', more rational, more coherent, and tending, it would seem, to draw somewhat closer to orthodoxy.

Jean de Lugio had written a substantial treatise which has not been preserved. Raynier Sacconi, who had held it in his hands, has left us, in his **Summa de Calharis** (1250),

a summary that is undoubtedly accurate and complete, but one of disheartening dryness and which has the serious drawback of placing important metaphysical theories — which are not explained to us and for which we are given neither proof nor context — on the same footing as dogmatic details of little interest. Nevertheless, it is not entirely impossible, thanks to this account— which we believe to be fair—
— a certain idea of what John of **Lugio's** philosophy may have been.

THE AUTHOR OF THE 'LIBER DE DUO PRINCIPIS'

The *Book of the Two Principles,* published in 1939 (') by Rev. Dondaine, might help us to reconstruct it even more fully if it were certain that its author was John of Lugio himself. It is certain that the *Liber* bears the mark of his influence and that, in certain parts (the theory of *creation,* for example), it appears to reflect his teaching. The refutation of free will may well, too, have been taken directly from the work of Jean de Lugio. One sometimes gets the impression that the ***Book** of the Two Principles** is a collection of notes taken from the master's works (unless, as the Reverend Father Dondaine hypothesises — though this seems unlikely to us — that the *Li fier* was an early work by Jean de Lugio, a first draft of his great lost *Treatise*). Whilst the **Li her de duobus principis** is associated with the school of Jean de Lugio and forms part of the same philosophical current, it is undeniable that it also deviates from it quite frequently, whether because the disciple misunderstood the master or because he wished to assert his independence from him by presenting his own personal reflections. Generally speaking, one might be inclined to attribute the sound and rigorous arguments to John of Lugio and the misinterpretations of his work to his disciple. But such a bias would not be without its dangers.

(') New edition: **The Book of **the** Two **Principles,** the Soul, the Translation,* and So On...* **by Christine Thouzellier, 1873.**

According to Mme Thouzellier, *The *Book of the Two Principles** is thought to have been written between 1250 and 1276, but the elements it borrows from John of Lugio date from an earlier period (1230–1235). It consists of a series of short treatises: **De libero* arbitrio** (On Free Will), **De* creafione** (On Creation), **De signis universali bus** (On Universal Signs (Terms)), **Compendium ad instructionem rudium** (A Compendium for the Instruction of the Uneducated), Contra *Garalenses* (against the Garatenses), *De li beio arbitrio* (a new treatise on free will), and *De perseculioni bus* (on persecutions) (•). The truly important treatises are those devoted *to free will and creation.* These are also the most carefully conceived.

The similarities observed between the metaphysics of John of Lugio and that of our author have dictated our method. It is above all the doctrine of John of Lugio that we are attempting to reconstruct, drawing on passages from *the Eiber* that appear to comment on or explain it. But we are thereby compelled to present this philosophy, so to speak, in two parts: on the one hand, by emphasising the points on which the theories of John of Lugio and the anonymous author agree; and, on the other hand, by highlighting the differences that set them apart.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF JEAN DE LUGIO.

The TWO PRINCIPLES

Jean de Lugio, like the author of *the *Book of the Two Principles**, professes a radical, absolute dualism. In place of the true, almighty God in Goodness and Eternity, there exists a false god, endowed with indefinite duration and almighty in the

(•) As regards the order in which these short treatises appear in the manuscript, the connection *that* some of them might reveal if they were better grouped together (for example, the 2• treatise on *the 'li bre* orbifre', which *ought to* follow the first), their dates of composition, and finally the distinction to be made between those that appear to reflect the thought of John **of Lugio and** those **that** clearly diverge **from it, we** refer the reader to Arno Borst *(Les Cafhares,* French translation, p. 220) and, above all, to M. Thouzellier, *Liure *des* deux principes**, pp. 39–42 and 61–63. We shall disregard the **De persecultioni bus**, which contains but a single idea, **namely** that true Christians are called upon to endure the persecutions of this evil world.

Evil. These two principles limit one another. It is because Evil has existed from all eternity and will always exist that the true God is compelled to reckon with it, to endure it. But because the true God is infinitely more real than evil, He triumphs over it at the end of time: a sort of necessity

— oriented *towards Good* — so that malicious enterprises turn against themselves (•) or fail to achieve their aim. The two principles are therefore neither equal (†) nor equivalent. The evil principle does not possess sufficient power to equal God (if this were the case, Evil and Good would be in equilibrium and nothing would happen either in the moral world or in the physical world), but it has had enough to upset the balance, precisely, divine creation, and to compel the true God to participate — *through his creatures,* who are drawn from his own substance — in Evil and Misfortune. The presence of a malignant root in the world has compelled the God of Good to *enter* into *time, to* temporalise or historicise the providential plan, and to bring about its *fulfilment.* He therefore escapes his adversary only in the eternal **Future**. Whilst, in his creation, he undergoes a temporal adventure, in his transcendence he remains, as it were, awaiting eternity. This is what all the absolute dualists of Languedoc and Italy had believed, in mythical terms; they never regarded the two principles as equal in value, dignity or reality, let alone in 'power, wisdom (src) and intelligence ' (otherwise, why would they have chosen to love God rather than the Devil†) but simply as equal in eternity. Yet they still diminished the quality of diabolical eternity — *the 'elernilas mala'* — referred to in the 'Livre *des deux principes'* — by equating it with an indefinite duration, certainly, but one that was chaotic and miserable, where only horror, death and punishment.

THE LIRRE DES DEU:C PRINCIPES

This fundamental inequality between the two principles and the two antagonistic natures, the **Si her de duobus* principiis*

(•) Reincarnations — willed by the Devil — ultimately ensure the salvation of souls.

emphasises this **unequivocally**, much as Jean de Lugio was to do. Not only is the true God the Most Holy, Most Just and Most Good Father (•), but He has the power to save *all souls* in the end. Because He is all-powerful over the good that is in His creatures, He can add something—a virtue—to the essences of those who were very good, and thus enable them to free other souls from satanic oppression. He will destroy the Devil (De *destructions polenfis,* ed. Thouzellier, p. 312), that is to say: render him incapable of corrupting, of causing the saints to die, or of harming them. Without a shadow of a doubt, for the author of *the Liber* as for John of Lugio, the Future One will consecrate the **quasi-absolute** triumph

absolute triumph of the true God. The principle of evil will persist, since it is eternal, but like the Satan of Catholicism, it will be reduced to its own malice and *to its* 'cùñïimen' (for it is, in itself, self-punishment).

Perhaps the most **profound** theory put forward by *Fiber* is that — presumably borrowed from John of Lugio — which attributes to the true God the power to increase being (†), that is, the resistance to evil of his creatures already established in the Good. This corresponds to the 'first divine mode of creation', to which we shall return. It is regrettable that Raynier Sacconi set it out in such a summary manner, because it presents many difficulties which John of Lugio may well have resolved. Firstly, this addition of something to the essence of created beings is rather obscure in itself. It would be easier to understand if it coincided, as in Bartholomew of Carcassonne, and in accordance with the **Augustinian** theory of the 'degrees of being', with an increase in ontological intensity in souls acquired to the Good. But John of Lugio does not appear to have read much of St Augustine. Rather, he conceived this surplus of goodness as being embedded within the souls

(•) Although the author of the *Liõer* invokes, at the beginning of his **Z'raifé**, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, he does not believe in the Catholic Trinity. For him, as for John of Lugio and most Cathars, the Father is *greater* than the Son and the Holy Spirit, whom he created. Furthermore, his God is very 'philosophical': there is is in him 'accidents'; in fact, thought and will coincide, all that that what he foresees will inevitably come to pass, etc.

good, modelled on the seed of malice which the devil, for his part, has planted within them. The two operations are symmetrical, and they bear a strong resemblance to the quasi-mechanical juxtaposition—which, moreover, is in keeping with the spirit of Catharism—that associates, in the same way, the Spirit with the soul and the soul with the body ([6]). Perhaps John of Lugio intended thereby to safeguard the eternity and *immutability of essences* (which, according to him, proceed from their creators like the rays of the sun, and are co-eternal with them) and, at the same time, explain how, *without ceasing to be themselves,* **they** could be burdened with an excess of good or an excess of evil (and, in the latter case, free themselves from evil as one casts off a burden).

But another difficulty immediately arises: since it is certain that created beings are made of the substance of their creators, it is hard to understand why the additional measure of good or virtue bestowed upon them was *not bestowed upon them from the very beginning*; and why God did not, from the outset, protect the good from evil. We do not know how John of Lugio resolved this contradiction. One may suppose that he upheld the immutability of essences by relying, as the author of *The Book* does, on the authority of Matthew: 'This noble creation of the very good was founded for eternity' (I, 20). He undoubtedly saw no contradiction in conceiving of essences as both eternal and mutable, **because he** specifically contrasted eternity with the time of Satanic subversion. It was because, he believed, Satan had substituted the world of mixture for the purity of the celestial world that the true God *was compelled to burden the essences.* In Catharism, as indeed in Catholicism and in all religions, there is a plane on which the God of eternity acts necessarily or freely within time and the sequence of events. Thus, in the age when the devil triumphs, *souls are not absolutely bound to one principle or the other:* they combine either with an element of good or with an element of evil. Jean de Lugio's theory is therefore ~~no~~ more untenable than that which holds, for example, that Satan has separated
souls from their spirits — *although the angelic communion is*

(•) Man is not a substantial composite: he is '*disjointed*'.

eternal — and also of their spiritual bodies, in order to imprison them, temporarily, *in physical bodies,* whilst awaiting the time when God will restore to them both their spirits and their incorruptible bodies. *The modification of essences is one* of *the necessities of the system.*

All absolute dualists had felt compelled to limit, in some way, the omnipotence of **the God** of Good, as is only natural given that there is an antagonistic power standing opposed to him. We are not speaking here merely of the absolute contradictions (*) which Catholic theologians themselves have regarded as incompatible with divinity, but also, and above all, of the impossibilities arising from the fact that God is subject to his own Reason, and that, on the other hand, being pure goodness, he has no influence over Evil. God cannot consent to falsehood, do evil ('), annihilate himself, or create another god absolutely like himself. (And according to John of Lugio and the author of *the *Liber*, what he does not will, he cannot do,* for will and power *are in him one and the same thing.)* The Cathars rightly emphasised the absurdity of claiming *that* God is not omnipotent because he lacks the power to lie, kill or steal. The fact remains, however, that he is, as it were, defenceless in the face of malevolent acts.

The great originality of John of Lugio's philosophy lies in the fact that it diminishes the power of the Good Principle more than the other dualists had done. (And it does not appear that the author of *the *Fiber** went as far as he did along this path.) The Albanians believed that **God** had been unable to prevent the Devil from corrupting part of his creation, but they usually drew a radical distinction between the invisible kingdom of the good God — the preserved world — and the satanic kingdom, and they confined the sphere of Evil's direct influence to the earth, a veritable hell: the world of mixture was the Earth. The incur-

(•) See on this subject: R. Nelli, Le Phénomène *calhare,* pp. 25–26.

(') If God were to bring about evil temporarily, and even for the sake of a higher Good, He would, in reality, be doing so *eternally*— something the Cathars could not accept. Furthermore, since He is not substantially distinct
— in substance from his creatures, if he were to permit them to do evil, he would be its *true author.*

The fall of the devil from heaven (^) which had led to the seduction, or rather the abduction (®), of a third of its inhabitants ('°) had been a catastrophe — but a catastrophe limited in time and, so to speak, in space — the effects of which were now reverberating throughout the divine creation. Elsewhere, unadulterated purity reigned (that of Good and that of evil).

Jean de Lugio's innovation lay in subjecting the entire material and spiritual universe, all beings created by the true God, *to the effects of satanic* corruption. Except for God himself, no being is purely good *{slellae* non *sunt mundae 1).* All living beings have received—without being free to accept or reject it—a certain malice which gives them the capacity to sin, that is to say, to adhere to Evil: they possess evil in potential within themselves (in the Aristotelian sense). Perhaps John of Lugio attributed this *general tendency of creatures to sin* to the fact that none of them could have been created perfect, or at least as perfect as the true God would have wished, and, consequently, that all were *capable of error.* Error would thus be the principle of all failings ("). Jesus Christ himself

(•) It is known that this myth, to which Bartholomew alludes obliquely, unfolded for the Albanians according to the following pattern: The Devil enters heaven and leads some of the angels into error, or into concupiscence. He then attempts to seize the angels who have remained faithful by force. But he is defeated. It is then that he ensures the submission of *those he* has deceived by imprisoning them in material bodies. These are the souls /oufes *that have fallen into matter all at once* — and who must pass from one body to another whilst awaiting their liberation.

(•) In any case, it was necessarily — without the intervention of free will — that the angels were seduced or carried off, and ultimately imprisoned within matter. This myth shows that divine creation was not 'homogeneous'. The defeated angels *were predestined* from all eternity (they represented the weak point of creation, the lower heavens). Others — the good ones — had received from God the power to resist evil, and they too resisted it as a matter of necessity: these were the angels of the higher heavens (of an essence closer to that of God, if one conceives of them as 'emanated').

('°) That is to say, one third of the angels, or rather, in *terms of substance, all the angels* (the *'animic* third*').* The subversion of the 'animic third' would have been more in keeping with the dualism of John of Lugio, but it does not appear **that he** accepted this either.

(") It would appear that, for Jean de Lugio (according to Sacconi), the angels' fall was caused not by pride, nor by lust, but

would have been determined to 'put into action' this potential evil had God not re-created him in such a way as to render him incorruptible. It is clear that under these circumstances the true God is not 'omnipotent', although, in His eternity, He is far more powerful than the Devil: He was unable to create essences as good as He would have wished because of the resistance the Devil opposes Him in each of them (°). Powerless in the face of evil, he can neither conceive of it *nor foresee it* (which perhaps explains why he only strengthened the being of his creatures after *the event*). Knowing only what necessarily follows from his essence, he 'sees' evil only when his adversary has made it manifest in Time. The **Future**
'evil' ones elude him (•).

John of Lugio goes even further: he believes that the God of eternity *is compelled to tolerate,* within his creatures and for a time, the evil that the Devil causes them to commit and the suffering he inflicts upon them as punishment. This is one of the points where there is a risk of seriously misinterpreting the thought of John of Lugio, a misinterpretation into which the author of *Le Livre* seems to have fallen. *Evil and* confinement — *another* form *of evil* — are, as we were saying, absolutely incompatible with the essence of the true God. Just as God, due to the Devil's intervention, *cannot prevent* his creatures from committing

commit *Error* (made necessary by *the relative frailty of beings* and the action of *the Prince of* Lies). It is the sole direct cause that John of Lugio attributes to the corruption of souls. No one does evil willingly. Those who do so are led to believe, by virtue of their very weakness, that it is good. It is thus, for example, that the Devil deceives souls by allowing them to mistake *evil* for *good,* whilst God allows them only good, without revealing to them that one cannot know evil without committing it. The angels imagine that free will is a Good. John of Lugio believed that sin had been committed in the higher worlds, but he certainly did not accept the myth of the battle in heaven, nor the fall of a third of the angels, since it was all the heavenly creatures who suffered the demon's bite. The theory of *the two principles* also ignores — or rejects — traditional mythology.

(") I do not believe that John of Lugio accepted the argument that the 'malignant implantation' stemmed from the fact that God was unable to make his creatures *as perfect as himself.* For there are some who, whilst lacking God's perfection, *are capable of resisting evil.*

([1] •) The author of the Li öer does not take a stance on this issue. He knows that God possesses absolute foreknowledge, and indeed that everything necessarily follows from His foreknowledge. In certain cases, he seems to believe that the **good** God also **knows** 'the evil futures'.

evil, nor can He prevent them from being punished for it, because punishment is the *consequence* of the evil committed and is of *the same nature as it.* He is therefore obliged to allow punishment *to follow the offence, to take its place, so to speak.* If God were to punish of his own accord, he would be doing evil; he would be evil itself. If, of his own free will, he were to allow the sinner to be punished, he would likewise be doing evil. When God appears to punish his creatures (who, moreover, have not deserved punishment, since they are not free), he is therefore not acting 'in accordance with his divine essence'; he is simply thereby demonstrating that he is involved, through his creatures, in a satanic mechanism in which, temporarily, *he serves the Devil,* allowing him to act as the creator of evil. Whilst, according to Catholic theory, God causes evil twice—by *permitting* it and by punishing *it* (freely)—according to Catharism, it is the Devil who intrudes *twice* upon creatures and, consequently, upon God himself, by forcing them to commit sin and by punishing them for having committed it. *He is Sin and Hell.*

It is almost certain *that* the author of the *Li her* had read John of Lugio, but it does not appear that he understood him properly. He interprets God's relationship with 'external' evil from a perspective that aligns with moderate dualism and even Catholicism. By maintaining that God 'causes' evil by not preventing it, *even* though He *could prevent it*—that is, by allowing His creatures to be punished—he speaks exactly like a monist. He declares that this good God *allows* Satan to act *precisely* in order to punish his creatures, whereas John of Lugio would, on the contrary, have said that God would be *relieved* not to be *obliged* to let Satan act in his stead. The author of *the *Liber** contradicts John of Lugio and contradicts himself by asserting: 1) that creatures have sinned, even though they have no free will;

2) by refusing to recognise that if God punishes them 'freely', He makes Himself guilty of the evil that the punishment represents.

We do not believe that John of Lugio could have upheld such a theory, which runs counter to what he thought elsewhere and to what all dualists believed. Building on these initial misinterpretations, the author of *the *Liber** is led to develop another, which, to a certain extent,

explains them. He is clearly anxious to bring himself into line with Catholic theology, at least on this particular issue, and to make God *the creator of all things.* This is why he ends up *misinterpreting* the Lugian theory of third-degree creation and asserting that God has, so to speak, *created the Devil,* by granting him (for example) permission to torment Bob. 'And on this basis,' he says, 'we can readily admit that Satan *was created or formed by the* Lord, the *true* God; that is to say, he was granted permission (ficenfiam) to afflict *Bob,* since, by the permission he obtained from the Lord, the true God, he did what he was powerless to do on his own. And so it may be said that he was *created by God* in the sense of having been appointed prince of the people—not in an absolute sense, but indirectly and by accident' (trans. Thouzellier).

The text by the author of *the Li* ôer is riddled with contradictions from which he cannot extricate himself (in the following paragraph he returns to the idea that the true God did not create either darkness or evil *absolutely or directly*), but he fails to convince anyone when he asserts that 'all things were created by him, in him and from him *(per iPsum,* ef in ip.so ef ez ipso)', since he has just stated that evil things were created by him only indirectly *and by accident* (and therefore simply: ez *ipso).* The ploy by which he attempts to attribute to the God of Good the creation of the entire material and spiritual universe is nothing more than a poor philosophical sleight of hand: John of Lugio had indeed written that creation of the third degree consisted in increasing the power of evil, but, as we have explained previously, the only means legitimately available to the Good God — in a dualist system such as that of John of Lugio — to increase the power of the Devil is to *sacrifice himself,* in one of his creatures ordained for that purpose, so that, through the sacrifice, he may free himself precisely from Evil and conquer Death. Which is quite a different matter.

T THE PRINCIPLE OF EVIL

One might think, on reading what Raynier Sacconi has preserved for us of John of Lugio's metaphysics, that it

gave Satan too much credit. This is not the case. God is, certainly, limited by the presence of Evil in the world. But evil is contained by Good; time, by eternity. Thus, the diabolical duration is ultimately overwhelmed by the superabundance of being that belongs solely to the true God. The action of evil is brief, whilst that of good reverberates without end: divine providence ensures that infinite *Good* nullifies *the excess of evil.* Evil deeds are, *by their very nature,* contradictory: the best example one can give of this is that the Devil's victories in time are defeats in eternity. His chief invention—the imprisonment of souls within material bodies—is transformed for them into an instrument of liberation. The identity of evil and punishment, once recognised, compels souls to fear both and to regard them as true nothingness, or at the very least as incompatible with authentic being and Happiness.

The devil is an uncertain, chaotic entity, whose power is exercised—outside his own domain, the realm of evil eternity— — — only over essences which he has succeeded, temporarily, in annexing, but from which he will, at the end of time, have to let go.

It is quite remarkable that the Cathars never clearly defined what they meant by the 'Principle of Evil'. It seems that Jean de Lugio and the author of *the Book of the Two Principles* are not averse to keeping it shrouded in obscurity. In truth, they deserve credit for ridding it of all the ridiculous myths that made it seem tangible. 'No one has ever seen,' they say, 'the Principle of Evil. *It* is *as hidden and remote as the true God.* It can only be known through its effects, that is to say, through the concrete or spiritual manifestations of evil that reveal it, but which do not coincide entirely with it.' › 'One must firmly believe,' says the author of the Li ôer, 'that there is another principle, that of Evil, mighty in iniquity, from which the power of Satan and of darkness, together with all the other powers waging war against the true Lord God, derive *{deri-vanlur)* (14) in reality and primarily.' *Compendium,* trans.

('•) Diabolical creatures coexist with the evil Principle; they are drawn from its substance. The word *'derivanlur'* would even suggest that they have *emanated* from it.

Thouzellier, p. 321). As we can see, Satan is not the principle of evil: he *derives* from it. It is no doubt for this reason that John of Lugio, according to Sacconi, identified the creator of the world not as the Devil, but as *the Father of the Devil* (who has never had a beginning and will have no end). The Father of the Devil can obviously be none other than the Principle of Evil itself (falsehood).

How does this malignant 'root', which John of Lugio conceives in such an abstract manner, manifest itself? Firstly, through creation risi hic (in the eyes of the flesh). All material beings — — things and bodies — are of satanic origin. They are characterised by the fact that they are vain and transitory (precisely: 'changeable'). As we have said many times, living beings, created by the Devil, are renewed (notably through procreation) but whilst constantly changing; beings of diabolical essence ( ), that is to say, those 'emanated' from the evil principle, will endure for ever, but not those who, having been created good, have been corrupted by the Devil. The latter will come to an end as 'composite' *beings*, the good souls returning to the true God.

The matter of which malevolent creatures are made is drawn *from the substance* of the evil principle, and is entirely distinct from that of which beings created good are composed. The author of **The Book of the Two Principles** — who seems here to draw directly on John of Lugio — states this explicitly in the **Compendium**: 'The words "heavens" and "earth" in the divine Scriptures refer to the intelligible (infeÏfi *gr bles)* creatures of the true God, who are capable of understanding and hearing, and not merely to the elements of this world, which are *changeable (permulabilia)* and *devoid of* reason' (Thouzellier's translation, p. 299). He adds further on: 'God is not the creator of the elements that are feeble and devoid of the malignant manifestation.'

(") We have emphasised elsewhere the difficulty the Cathars had in conceiving of *evil spiritual* beings. If they are spirits, they are not entirely evil (cf. M'ie Thouzellier's hypothesis concerning the substance of Lucifer, which is said to be equal to that of God). Undoubtedly, for John of Lugio, satanic entities are *corrupt* by nature, either — as in the case of Bartholomew of Carcassonne — — either because they possess less being, or because they are materialised. Everything suggests that, for Jean de Lugio, the evil principle was, at its core, of the same essence as matter *(prope nihil)*.

It is therefore certain that diabolical matter is not to be confused with the elements created by the true God, and that it reflects, as is only natural, the very characteristics of the nature of evil. It is quasi-nothing, just as he himself is quasi-nothing; corruptible, just as he himself is corrupt and a corrupter from all eternity; evil, finally, because it bears within it the suggestion and the possibility of evil, and above all the power to make the spirits it poisons forget their heavenly origin...

But there is a delicate point that must give us pause. Given the theory of universal (or quasi-universal) corruption espoused by John of Lugio, one might think that, in his mind, this implied *the corruption of the elements* belonging *to the good creation.* Thus, at the time of the Fall, Satan would have had at his disposal *both* the evil elements that are consubstantial with him and the elements of a heavenly nature that had been corrupted and appropriated by him. This theory, which John of Lugio seems to have been the only one to uphold, remains very obscure to us. And we recognise that one might be led by this to consider that there was, for him, only a single substance used both by the God of Good and, *in its corrupted form,* by the Devil. But we have shown elsewhere that this was not possible. The good creation, even in its matter, is not *radically* corrupted (it remains in an eternal relationship with God) and will be restored at the end of time; on the other hand, it is evident that the substance of the Devil, which *never* had a beginning, was not derived from that of God (the Devil was not originally *created good,* as in moderate dualism); finally, there is a plane where good substances and evil substances subsist *separately* and where, consequently, each realm must have its own matter. Certainly, John of Lugio believed in the existence of two antagonistic substances.

But it seems that these theories confused the author of **Si her de duobus principis**, who, perhaps, did not view them in their proper light. The partial and temporary corruption of the celestial world, as described by John of Lugio, could easily have been confused by him with that

which, *according to mild dualism,* the rebellious angel would have inflicted upon the good creation. This is why, we believe, he went to war against the *Garatenses* (disciples of Bishop Garattus, and moderate dualists) who believed precisely that Lucifer — a creature of the true God — had corrupted the elements (water, air, earth, fire), which were also originally good and holy. He refutes their view with a series of arguments whose structure we are already familiar with and which are of little interest. 'Is this corruption of the good elements,' he asks, 'in itself good or evil?' It is obviously evil (and the Garatenses could not possibly regard it as good without contradicting themselves). — 'Did God will it?' No, for if He had willed it, He would thereby have willed evil. — 'But perhaps, by consenting to this relative evil, did He "will" to bring about a greater good?' ' 'Has not this depravity enabled Him to establish His reign with the new souls that are formed daily through the union of man and woman?' Unacceptable, replies our author: the Garatenses proscribe marriage as being diabolical in essence. (Moreover, and above all, it is well known that the absolute Dualists did not accept that the good God could have the possibility 'of making use of evil', *even temporarily,* to bring about a greater good.) — 'If God did not will the corruption of his elements, did he at least permit it?' ' No, because in that case, by permitting it, he would have made himself truly guilty of that evil. One can guess the conclusion, which is, moreover, quite logical: *God has been compelled, against his will, to witness the* corruption *of the elements,* and one must acknowledge that there exists, opposed to him, another principle capable of going against his will 16)s

L CORRUPTION

We can see the significance of the idea of corruption in the *Book of the First* Principles. It played a more important role

(") This was the conclusion reached by Jean de Lugio himself, but in a completely different context. For, let us repeat, the material world **was, for him,** composed **chiefly** of elements *that were purely* and *originally* satanic, and not of corrupted divine elements.

still present in the system of John of Lugio. For most religions, corruption begins in the celestial world. Yet it is there that it is most difficult to explain. It is fairly easy to conceive that man might have fallen, since the Devil was already there to corrupt him; but in a purely spiritual creation, and, so to speak, under God's very eye, how could evil have made its appearance unless an eternal evil principle had introduced it there? And this was precisely the hypothesis put forward by Dualism.

But it still follows that the creatures of the good God must be of such a nature that they can *accept evil or suffer it.* This amounts to supposing that the creation of **the** good **God**, in John of Lugio's system, is *flawed and will only be completed through the elimination of the Evil One.* What difference is there, indeed, between the third (future) age – that in which the true God will have reclaimed all his creatures – and the *second,* in which he must endure the aggression of Evil: namely, that in the third age, the essences, having become sinless and confirmed in Grace, will no longer have the power to sin. It is only at that moment that God will be the true, almighty God and that his creation will be definitively accomplished. Consequently, in the second stage—the one that concerns us here—the general cause of *corruption* is the fact that a whole part of the celestial world is still *defenceless* against diabolical action; the opposition of the evil principle has prevented God not, as Master William said, from making his angels like himself—which is impossible— but from strengthening them all in their being, and making them *immutable.* The satanic operation is therefore of a purely mechanical nature, leaving no room for freedom. *The essences that were destined to fall have been separated; the unstable compounds have broken apart—that is to say, the angels of the highest heavens,* or, within the compounds, the most fragile third: the soul. This means that there was a part of the celestial world closely united with God and, as such, already *created,* which resisted evil; and another part, further removed from Him, less firmly bound to Him, which succumbed.

That being established, the details of the corruption become secondary. The ontological weakness of the angels—the weakness alluded to in the myths that interpret the Fall as a kind of battle in which there were victors and vanquished—

— is no different from the intellectual weakness that John of Lugio seems to attribute to them; for, after all, the angels were seduced, and since they did not possess the free will that would have allowed them to 'choose' between good and evil, they were purely and *necessarily* deceived. They were determined always to do Good and to believe that what the Devil offered them (the knowledge of good and evil, the deceptive free will, etc.) was *Good.* It therefore seems that, for John of Lugio, the true cause of the angels' failure — of their corruption — was Error. *One of the angels' weaknesses was their susceptibility to falsehood.* On this point, John of Lugio proved himself a more profound philosopher than his predecessors, who attributed the fall of good creatures to pride or lust: he clearly saw that pride and lust were merely forms of error, and that error was a consequence of finitude. And in this way he linked himself more directly to the true Christian tradition, which regards the Devil as *the Father of* Lies, that is to say, the instigator of illusion and error; this explained in advance that, in order to defend against the evil principle, the true **God** would (necessarily) have *enlightened* all men coming into this world, that He would have sent Jesus Christ to Earth to make them 'see' where the truth lay (obscured by the Liar), and that He would finally have engaged souls in a *process of* purification (reincarnations) which *empirically* and *mechanically* provides them with the knowledge of true Good.

But are finitude and the limitations inherent in creatures sufficient to explain the error† They could have been faithful and obedient; they could have remained attached to Charity. It seems that, in order to lead a spiritual being to *abandon* the divine sphere, the Devil must, in one way or another, 'nihilise' it—that is to say, reactivate the element of nothingness represented by its very limitation, its 'lack'. Curiously enough, however, Jean de Lugio here conceives of the Devil's action as an *addition,* rather than a *diminution.* The Devil introduces his matter into good beings, like a foreign body: he 'hampers' them. Whilst for the Languedoc dualists the Devil's action transforms the natural nothingness of limitation into effective 'nihilisation'—that ontological devaluation brought about by sin—for John of Lugio, corruption—that is to say, essentially, the

submission to nothingness—results from *the very implantation* within them of an active seed of death that causes them to hate being and life.

We have seen how difficult it is to grasp the way in which John of Lugio conceived the nature of the Evil Principle. It is the 'foreign god' *(deus alienus)* from whom the 'gods' proceed. For Jean de Lugio, who is clearly not a polytheist, these gods are merely the personifications of vices, the ultimate cause of which is the Principal Malice. This evil principle is thus 'malice, iniquity, greed, impiety, sin, pride, death, envy, slander, vanity, injustice, perdition, confusion, *corruption,* fornication' (Raynier Sacconi). We do not know whether Jean de Lugio listed all these sins—which are the true attributes of Evil—in such a disorderly fashion. Raynier Sacconi seems to us to be closer to the truth when he reports that, for Jean de Lugio, the evil principle was
'a restless evil filled with the venom of death', at once existing and non-existent, etc. The author of **The Book of* the *Two* Principles*, although he attempts to align himself with orthodoxy — in a manner that is, moreover, artificial and at the cost of numerous contradictions, by imagining that the Devil was, so to speak, *recreated* as such, and used as such, by the true God (7)'—is likely to have drawn inspiration from John of Lugio in the definitions he gives us of the Evil Principle. 'It is,' he says, 'the being powerful in evil, the Principle from which all evils that were, are and will be originate (Compendium, p. 311). *No* evil—whether relative, essential, temporary (provisional) or eternal—*can exist apart from it.*

Philosophically speaking, it has two essential characteristics: 1) *its power is vain and [also]* futile, because

(") Arno Borst seems to believe *(Les Cathares,* French translation, p. 227) that Satan was, in the ñ iôer, actually created by the true God. He takes the Dualist's statement (that Satan depends on God and was created by him) at face value. And he adds, in a footnote, that 'this is the doctrine of the moderate Cathars'. This view is untenable. The moderate Cathars believed that the devil had *truly* been created by the good God and had subsequently become corrupt through his own free will, whereas John of Lugio and the author of *the *Liber** believe that the *Devil* is *an eternal* principle. His 'use' by God in the **Liber** is not sufficient to alter his essence and make him a Son of God. There is nothing here but a rather childish dialectical manoeuvre.

that its effects are changeable and transitory (contradictory) and consequently cancel each other out; *[also* because it operates on a plane (evil, death, corruption) which has only a negative existence.

We have stated above that Jean de Lugio and the author of *the* **Liber** do not appear to have been familiar with the Augustinian theory which explains, ontologically, corruption as a diminution of being, as a tendency towards nothingness (1), so that it is not always clear in what sense — in their view — Satan's power is 'vain and false' *(poleslas non vera).* But it is certainly true that it is vain and false in relation to that of the true God. And in any case, the definition they give of the evil principle corresponds to that proposed by Saint Augustine of the *sub-slanlia mala* (death, darkness, corruption): the Devil exists only in negations and 'privation' (regarded, admittedly, as realities, but as inner realities). Whilst the author of **Li her** does not see in the 'nihil' of verse 1, 3 of the Gospel of John the totality of evil entities *reduced to nothing,* he draws on his First *Epistle* (1:5) to demonstrate *that darkness is not part of that 'universality' regarding which the Apostle writes to the Romans: 'For through him, and* in *him, and* from *him* are *all things'* (Nom., II, 36). (John did indeed say: 'For God is light, and in him there is no darkness.') It is therefore another 'God' who created darkness (*De crealione,* p. 271). The theory of Bartholomew of Carcassonne and that of the author of *the* **LibCF**, although not sharing the same starting point, thus *converge.* John of Lugio and his disciple do not say that the Devil is nihil, but they show that his works *are nothing but* *nihil*.

2) The second characteristic attributed to the Evil Principle is perhaps more significant. Whilst our two authors place less emphasis than Bartholomew on its ontological insufficiency, they do, on the other hand, attribute to it—and *to it alone*—a role that Cathar theologians reserve **for the** one **God**: *that of punishing,* and the foundation of hell. One cannot over-emphasise the origin-

('•) For them, the Devil and his creation are not 'nihil', a 'né‹inf *relali f',* in the sense understood by Bartholomé of Carcassonne.

nature of this theory, and indeed its philosophical depth: 'Misfortune, punishment, anguish, error, play, torment, chains and the Devil have neither beginning nor end: *these names denote the supreme principle of Evil and its effects...'* *(Compendium,* ed. Thouzellier, p. 333). A good God would not have created the Devil to punish him eternally – the nature *of uncreated Evil is to suffer eternally.* The Devil is the principle of both misfortune and punishment. He suffers and causes suffering ('•). He punishes without seeking to be just, and punishes himself (without, of course, seeking to atone for anything). The Evil Principle is the *despair* that stands in opposition to the Christ-like 'Way'.

As for his creative powers, we have seen that they, too, are of a negative nature: reduced to their very essence, he and his direct creatures are nothing but suffering, incoherence and wickedness. Its action upon created beings is entirely one of corruption and destruction, and perhaps, to a certain extent (though neither John of Lugio nor the author of the *Liser* stated this), *of chance.* The Evil Principle is 'free' because it modifies itself, blindly, at the whim of the revolutions of matter. Its free will is feeble *and futile,* because it rests upon this indeterminacy and upon the contingency of the irrational elements (''). Perhaps it is for this reason that John of Lugio believed that diabolical futures eluded the foreknowledge of the true God.

For the Languedoc Cathars, the evil principle was
pure *evil,* sin, *corruption, suffering, death and near-nothingness.* For John of Lugio and for the author of the *Li fier*, it is all of these things, but also and above all misfortune, self-punishment and despair. We have never understood how serious heresiologists could have maintained that the absolute Dualists regarded the Principle of Evil as 'equal' to that of Good, and their **respective** creations **as** equivalent.

('•) When he can no longer **inflict suffering, he becomes** his **own** misfortune; he is reduced to the fire from which he was born, to suffering.

(••) He dwells *in the shadow of* death, where all is ***chaos*** and **eternal** horror **(Job 10:22).**

ON CREATION

The Cathars opposed the Catholic theory that God created the world out of nothing — *ex nihilo* — that is to say, that He brought into existence, without any pre-existing material cause, beings outside Himself, whereas previously (in real or logical anteriority) there were none. Bartholomé de Carcassonne (quoted by Durand de Huesca), Jean de Lugio (summarised by Raynier Sacconi) and the author of *the *Book of the Two Principles** were of the same opinion on this matter: they attributed more or less the same meaning to 'creation' and 'fabrication' (°') and believed that this creation or fabrication had consisted, *for the two Principles,* in organising beings from pre-existing matter.

But what is this pre-existing matter? Arno Borst
tends to see in it the eternal matter of ancient philosophies, a passive reality, independent of the God of Good and the God of Evil, so that, according to him, there would be three eternal principles in absolute dualism: the True *God, the Evil One* and *Matter.* But this does not seem tenable. Whilst the Albanians believed that this world was eternal (precisely: 'will have no end: *nunquam habebil* /inem'), they also thought that its constituents were perishable,
'reduced to nothing', 'arising from nothing and returning to nothing' (Bartholomew), corruptible (John of Lugio), vain and transitory
{Book of the *Two Principles).* At the end of time, the Devil will certainly remain, as will his abode: hell, which is on this earth; but his 'creation' will be shattered, reduced to its irrational and chaotic elements... It is therefore not possible to make matter understood in this way — a sort of permanent chaos

(") To create is to make something out of nothing. To make is to fashion one thing from another. For Catholics, God is both Creator and Maker. For the Cathars, the two principles are merely Makers. This did not prevent some of them, in the time of Moneta de Creinone, from maintaining that the true God *was* both creator and *maker*, whilst the Devil was *merely* a maker. Bartholomew, John of Lugio and the author of *the *Liber** undoubtedly regard Good and Evil as makers. But they feign confusion between 'creating' and 'making' and, consequently, use *'creare'* in place of *'facere'*. One need only bear in mind
that, in their view, it is never a matter of 'creation' per se, but **of a 'way of making'**.

indefinite but by no means immutable, always reborn of itself but in contradictory forms and of a malignant essence because it is not grounded in being—the equivalent of a third, neutral principle which Good and Evil might have used indifferently (°[2]). Everything suggests, on the contrary, as we have already said, that evil matter is consubstantial with the evil principle.

In absolute dualism, as in ancient Manichaeism—where souls are but fragments of the divine substance, and evil entities *are* 'modes' of the evil principle—pre-existing matter *is the* very *balance of the creators* (it is for this reason that God suffers in his creatures when they fall into Satan's power; it is also for this reason that he would destroy himself if he were unable to save them all).

We must therefore admit that there exists an 'invisible' matter — that from which the God of Goodness drew his creatures which is one with his substance and shares in his 'true' eternity. Such was the view of John of Lugio, who believed that the God of Good possessed another world besides the material world—a world that was, admittedly, vulnerable to the Demon's attacks, but made of a purer matter than that which constituted the visible world. Bartholomew of Carcassonne saw an even greater distinction between Heaven and Earth, that is to say, between the *incorruptible* elements of the City of God and the material elements (water, earth, air, fire) utilised by the Devil.

Malignant creatures, for their part, belong to the substance of the Evil Principle. This is why the Cathars sometimes believed that whilst the true God had created nothing ex *nihilo,* the Evil Principle had indeed created its demons *out of nothing,* that is to say, from its own essence, since it is in itself *nihil* (that is to say, relative nothingness). (Here they took the word 'ontological' in its 'Augustinian' sense.) Jean Guiraud sensed the truth on this point when he wrote: 'Some taught the creation ex *nihilo* of matter by the evil principle, on the one hand because it is subject to corruption, fa

(") We must therefore disregard this third principle, as well as the supposed contradiction that Arno Borst perceives in the system *(Les Galhares,* French translation, p. 228).

matter cannot be eternal (••) and therefore had a beginning (°^), and, on the other hand, because, *being evil,* it could only have originated from an evil god (°^).'

In the *Book of the Two Principles*, matters are not quite so clear. One might indeed suppose that, since diabolical corruption has spread to almost the whole of divine creation, it first attacked its constituent material elements. But the very fact that these elements were threatened with corruption clearly shows that, according to the Cathars, they were not *of* the same nature as those that formed part of the substance of the corrupting agent: indeed, certain entities belonging to the divine world *resisted subversion.* Undoubtedly, satanic beings existed in their own right and were not of the same nature as the good angels. To maintain that the Devil borrowed the elements of his creation from the true God, after having corrupted them, would be to diminish the autonomy of the evil principle and to equate it with the fallen angel of Moderate Dualism, whose theses the author of *the *Liber** specifically refutes in the treatise **Contra Garalenses**.

However, Mr Tliouzellier writes in his edition of *the* *Liber *de jun princi pes**, p. 81: 'Nothing in Sacconi's summary suggests that by "pre-existing matter" John of Lugio means "divine essence", as the heretic questioned a little later by Moneta of Cremona would have one suppose. ' I find it difficult to agree with the eminent heresiologist, since Sacconi does indeed state that, according to Jean de Lugio, creatures have existed from all eternity alongside their creators, and that these creators *do not precede their creatures in time,* but simply, logically, *in that they are their causes.* Moneta, for his part, confirms that the Cathars regarded souls as *co-eternal with* God

(") J. Guiraud, *Histoire de l'Inquisition au Moyen Âge,* vol. I, p. 48. Diabolical matter is not eternal, as we have seen,
but *infinite.*

(••) Logically speaking, it began from all eternity with the
evil principle. It is consubstantial with it.

(") Since this 'nihil' is the very substance of the Devil, here again there is *formation* rather than creation. The devils are formed from *a 'nihil'* which is ***something* within the evil principle.**

(This refers here only to 'good' souls, but it is permissible to think, as Sacconi says regarding John of Lugio, that evil souls were in the same logical and substantial relationship with the Principle of Evil). That good creatures are of the very substance of God is clearly indicated once again by John of Lugio's interpretation of Genesis (I, 1): 'In *the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.'* In the beginning—*that is to say, in the Son*— God created the heavens and the earth. I concede that John of Lugio never expressly stated that God created good beings from his own substance, but he does, after all, imply it (2®). Furthermore, it would be difficult to imagine, alongside the true God, an eternally good substance that had not been derived from him, either directly or indirectly, or that had not had its material and efficient cause in him.

In the *Book of the Two Principles,* the arguments are, as always, more obscure, because the Cathar there constantly confuses — as, indeed, do their modern commentators—the substance of — which beings are made and the beings themselves insofar as they are formed with a purpose in mind. But I do not think there is any reason to consider, as Mlle Thou-zellier does, an 'equality of substance (°*) between God and the Angel Lucifer'. This equality of substance might, at a stretch, have been accepted by moderate dualists, who believed that Lucifer had originally been created good, but not by the author of *Lif›er* nor by John of Lugio, for whom the Devil is *the principle* or emanation of the evil principle – and has been so from all eternity. (The 'modifications' to which he may be subjected by the true God may increase his malignancy and harmfulness (a creation of the third degree), but obviously do not alter his nature.)

In the **Lifer*,* the essences of the evil principle are precisely

(••) The proofs — that is to say, the scriptural quotations by the author of *the Liber* (Thouzellier, p. 249) — are not very clear: Christ born of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20), the world created from invisible matter (Wisdom 2:18), man animated by the *breath of God* (Genesis 2:7). — But these *substances* undoubtedly proceed from God.

(") I do not know what M[l]Thouzellier means by *'equal* substance'. Does she mean that God and Lucifer have the same substance? Or a similar substance, of the same nature?

in the same relationship to Him as those of the true God to their Creator. These essences are *evil* by nature, because they are drawn from His essence. The true creatures of the Principle of Evil seem, moreover, *to be nothing but*
'modes' *of evil* (sins, punishments, anguish, error, fire, torment, chains... and the Devil himself, who *has neither beginning* nor end) (•). It is impossible to imagine that the author of the Liber regarded them as having anything in common with the creatures of the good God. The truth is that in John of Lugio, as in the **Liber**, we are curiously and paradoxically dealing with two juxtaposed 'pantheisms', that of Good and that of Evil, in which the two gods—the true and the false—are *consubstantial* and *co-eternal* with their respective creations.

I do not therefore believe that, as regards pre-existent nature, we should further complicate the already rather muddled doctrines of John of Lugio and the author of *the *Liber** by imagining, as Arno Borst does, an eternal matter conceived at times as neutral, or *as evil* — in order to highlight the alleged contradiction in conceiving of an *eternal matter, independent of the principles and yet evil;* or, as Mr Le Thouzellier does, by expressing surprise that there should be *essences of the same substance as God and yet* evil. Nothing of the sort is to be found either in John of Lugio or in the **Libro Ele duobus principiis**. At most, one might concede that in John of Lugio — and especially in the author of the *Libro* — it is not as clearly shown as in Bartholomew of Carcassonne how — ontologically speaking — a good essence differs from an evil one. This is, in fact, one of the weaknesses of their doctrine. But it is nonetheless certain that there are good essences created by God and others, evil ones, created by the Devil (°°); that the former are invisible, eternal and incorruptible by nature (those that have been corrupted will be restored to incorruptibility

(••) In John of Lugio (according to Raynier Sacconi), the 'gods'—whether creations or emanations, co-eternal with evil—are 'the *vices* or malevolent *spirits' (Mors, corruptio,* etc.).

(") If the diabolical nature were of the same nature as the celestial nature, how could one explain, for example, that the Devil imprisoned souls in *bodies of clay?* The angels would have been imprisoned in a substance identical to their own l

perishable), whilst the others—the visible ones—would be 'reduced to nothing', chaotic and transitory (albeit, it is true, for an indefinite duration). There is no doubt that, according to our two doctors, the world organised by the Devil must one day come to an end. Material bodies will not survive the liberation of the souls, and the *spiritual bodies* which they will receive – *for John of* Luyio *foresees a* resurrection *of the dead* – will be more firmly grounded in being than bodies made of clay. The elements created by the Evil Principle will return, as I have already said, to chaos, and the Devil to his prison of fire...

Consequently, when one does not insist on making the two creators and the two 'natures' of the *gods 'equal'* › (?) and of *'equal'* (?) *natures*—which renders Catharism incomprehensible—one sees that, as all absolute dualists have maintained, there are in the world two kinds of matter which oppose one another just as the Principles themselves do. The matter created by God prevails over that created by the Devil, just as eternity prevails over time, and being over (relative) nothingness.

Everything we have just set out concerns the substance of beings and things. But we know from Raynier Sacconi that John of Lugio held a rather original theory of creation, which explained how the God of Good had organised beings for well-defined tasks. It should be noted straight away that this theory concerns only the work of the true God and emphasises the fundamental inequality between the two principles. (God can make some of his creatures sinless, save all the others, *and thwart the Devil's malice,* whilst the latter cannot *make God better than he is,* nor prevent souls from attaining liberation, etc.)

According to Raynier Sacconi, who outlines them very briefly in the **Summa de Calharis**, John of Lugio believes that God employs three ways of creating (or 'making'). The first consists in bringing beings *from* the good *to* the better (*de bono* ad *melius).* This stems from the absolute power that the true God possesses within the Good—that is to say, over those of his creatures who are already established in the Good—a power which enables him to increase their resistance to evil. It is in this way that he made Christ sinless

and neutralised within him the demonic influence that might have caused him to fall into corruption. He also preserved the good angels and recreated them so that they might help souls to free themselves as well. This theory is neither lacking in strength nor in logic. The true God, limited by evil, **regains** his infinite power within the Good.

The second way of creating transforms evil into good *{creare de malo in bonum}*. This means that souls created good but who have fallen into evil can be transformed, enlightened and redeemed. Through reincarnation, through the example of Christ, through the teachings of the Cathar Church, and through a kind of necessity or Grace (universal and unmerited), souls free themselves from their material prison. *All souls will be saved.*

This creation — or, to be precise, re-creation — can be explained, like the first, by a sort of ontological perfection. However one views it — whether as an increase in spiritual intensity or the addition of a surplus of divine substance (such as 'charity', for example) — it is evident that this change affects the being, the substance of the creature.

The third mode of creation is more obscure, and *does not act upon substances.* It involves only the divine action itself: it transforms 'foreign' evil into a worse evil *(malo* in *peins facere),* it increases the extent of evil. 'It is simply,' says Father Dondaine, 'the permission granted to the Evil Principle and his ministers, the evil angels—his creatures—to exert a temporary constraint upon souls' (Dondaine, **Fiber**, p. 32).

One might think that the author *of *Dii Li her de diiobus princi pris** borrowed his theory of creation from Jean de Lugio: it bears a striking resemblance to the one of which Sacconi has left us a summary. As regards the first two modes, it is even likely that it reproduces it exactly; but the third raises difficulties which would suggest that the disciple misunderstood his master. It is difficult to see why the true God would need to allow the Devil to coerce souls, since the Devil coerces them all too readily and at every opportunity — or to allow him to *entice* them, since they are not free. Even if one (improperly) calls this violence 'temptation'

> exerted upon them by the Devil, then one must acknowledge that, in their regard, there is never anything between God and the Devil but a trial of strength, a battle, in which souls, in absolute dualism, take no part whatsoever. We have already shown, with regard to the nature of God, that his 'divinity' has nothing to do with the punishment that necessarily befalls his creatures as a consequence of the evil they have done. Punishment is the very essence of the Devil: it is the Devil himself... We must now return to the *notion of sacrifice,* which we had only touched upon previously and which corresponds

most likely to the 'creation of the third degree' as described by Jean de Lugio.

The author of the Book makes no reference to *the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the higher worlds,* which nevertheless constituted the key myth of Lugian theology. With John of Lugio, we find ourselves in a more coherent and logical context where an echo of ancient Manichaeism is combined with the role traditionally attributed to Jesus Christ. In ancient Manichaeism, God sacrificed one of his luminous entities to the voracity of the monster of evil, so that the latter's power might be, as it were, diluted within the being of his victim. Similarly, Jesus Christ dies here to slay death and halt corruption. The First *Epistle of Peter* (3:22) seems to recall this, showing us Jesus Christ *'deglutians morem, heredes vitae e| i-ceremur'* (devouring death, which sought to devour him in order to transform it, for our sake, into a passage to eternal life). In the higher worlds, says John of Lugio (quoted by Sacconi), Christ suffered, was crucified, died and was buried (°°). In the celestial world, the Devil has already been vanquished. The Judgement has already taken place! Jean de Lugio was certainly closer to ancient Manichaeism on this point alone, it is true, than his disciple was. But he was also, and more so than his disciple, in keeping with the true spirit of Catharism, which has always sought to make the sacrifice of the Son the symbol of that of the entire Divinity, which suffers within its creatures the evil of sin and the evil of (necessary) atonement. Let us add that the sacrifice, thus conceived, truly corresponds to a mode of creation that affects the

(°) Some Cathars believed that the Crucifixion was a sacrificial rite to atone for the sins committed by Jesus Christ in his previous incarnations; but for the most part, Christ's *sacrifice* was not an *atonement.* The Christ has nothing to atone for.

essences: firstly, that of the entity which sacrifices itself and thereby attains a greater state of being, even ontological fulfilment; and secondly, that of the Evil Principle which, on the contrary, emerges diminished from this ordeal. For, after all, what purpose would there be *in increasing the Devil's malice* if not precisely to undermine his power?

We therefore believe that Jean de Lugio's theories concerning the three creations can be summarised as follows:

1) *Substance.* — All created beings are drawn from the substance of their creators. There are therefore two kinds of matter: celestial matter and diabolical matter. The one forms the basis of incorruptible essences; the other, of vain, corruptible and transitory essences (though reborn and endowed with indefinite duration).

2) *Spiritual creatures.* — They may be transformed by the true God in the direction of progress towards the Good:

o) God can increase their moral worth and their resistance to evil by enabling them to share in an increase of divine power, bringing them as close as possible to Him (or uniting them more closely with Him?).

h) He can save lost souls because He created them incorruptible in essence, and satanic corruption is merely a sort of graft, an addition, which does not alter their primordial nature, which is of God. In the end, they will all be freed from satanic hold, by *the* very *direction* of divine necessity.

c) God, who has no difficulty in opposing evil, has the power to sacrifice Himself to overcome evil. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the higher planes symbolises that which takes place wherever the principle of evil causes His creatures to suffer. This sacrifice will only cease at the end of time, when God has liberated Himself by freeing all the beings He has created. This third mode of creation increases the Devil's malice simply by 'casting evil out'. It brings about his downfall by returning him to his true nature, which is to be both sin and self-punishment.

'S DENIAL OF FREE WILL

We know from Raynier Sacconi that John of Lugio did not believe in free will. He even denied the God of Goodness complete freedom of action. God, limited by his 'necessary' being, is also and above all limited by the existence of the Evil Principle (31). All absolute dualists believed, like John of Lugio, that the corruption of souls and their ultimate redemption by God formed part of a grand mechanism that left
any room for the freedom of creatures. The negation of free will is the centrepiece of the system. From the beginning of time to the end of the world, the cosmic drama essentially features only two characters, God and the evil principle, who vie for souls. These souls, in turn corrupted or saved by one or the other, have, so to speak, no autonomous destiny. They 'serve', without freedom, God or the Devil, depending on whether God or the Devil *makes use of them*. Consequently, for believers, the apparent fluctuations of free will simply corresponded to the twists and turns of a struggle of which they were *not even 'free' to be aware.*

Some Cathars believed, like Saint Augustine, that whilst man was free to do evil, he needed God to do good, and that free will led more to sin than to salvation. Others saw, precisely, in the illusions of free will that they experienced as nothing more than a sort of trap devised by the Devil to lead the good angels into doing evil (°°). John of Lugio rejects free will outright as an impossibility, and on this point it does not appear that he modified the traditional doctrine common to the Occitan Albigenses and the Italian *Albanenses*.

(•') In reality, this limitation on God imposed by the necessary nature of his essence (Avicebron) is not a limitation at all. God can do whatever he wills, but he wills only what he can do. The constraints imposed on his *action* by the Evil Principle are the only ones that truly affect him: he cannot make his creatures as perfect as he would have wished. On the material plane, the Devil therefore prevents *God's will and power from coinciding.*

(••) The Devil, being very deceitful, told the Angels that God was deceiving them by allowing them only to do good. He, on the other hand, gave them the power to do either *good or evil* (Catholic prayer, 42nd century).

The thesis set **out in the** ***Liber de duobus*** **principii*** is certainly drawn **from** Jean de Lugio's lost ***treatise***. It concerns the events that took place in Heaven, in the divine world where everything began, and not in this world, which manifests only the effects of corruption and where man is but a fallen angel. What it denies is *the free will of angels,* thereby opposing both the Catholics and the moderate dualists.

Jean de Lugio proceeds from the principle that everything in God proceeds by *necessity.* Everything that God wills and is able to do (33) necessarily comes to pass in accordance with His absolute foreknowledge, which reveals all things to Him *in the same eternal present.* It is therefore impossible for what God has foreseen as destined to come to pass not to come to pass; consequently, God knew that His angels — who were imperfect — would corrupt His kingdom. If He did not create them perfect — as He would have wished in order to prevent this moral catastrophe — *it is because He found it impossible to do so.* As John of Lugio (quoted by Sacconi) expressly states: 'God could not make His creatures as perfect as He would have wished.'

Undoubtedly, moderate Catholics and dualists object that God granted free will to his angels and that they, consequently, freely chose to do evil *when they could have done good.* In this matter, neither God nor the principle of evil (which does not exist) is responsible for their fall: their sin lies in having misused their free will. John of Lugio replies that free will is in *itself* an impossibility, and the author of *the *Liber** adds that, even if one *were to adopt* the *monists'* position—that is to say, by admitting free will as they do—the latter remains incomprehensible. Indeed, either God, knowing in advance that his angels — created imperfect — would ruin his kingdom, would not have bestowed upon them this fateful gift (it being understood, of course, that they could only sin, according to the monists, through free will), or else, foreseeing (°^) the evil consequences of their freedom, God

(") Within his own domain: that of Good; he has no power over the realm of evil.

(••) One might object that God had not foreseen these consequences of freedom; but, in that case, He would not be omnipotent as the monists claim, and one would have to believe, like the dualists, that an Evil Principle limits His knowledge and power.

He would have granted it to them all the same, but in that case it would be He who would be the true author of evil. This is something no wise person could accept.

We must therefore acknowledge that there is no free will, and that the sole cause of the corruption of the angels is the Evil Principle. It will be noted that, clearly, what matters to John of Lugio is to demonstrate—by refuting the idea of free will—*the existence of a Principle of Evil.* For, without a doubt, *if there is no free will,* given that two opposing impulses—the good and the evil—are observed in the creature, one is compelled, according to Aristotelianism, to attribute to them different and antagonistic causes. But here we find ourselves in a vicious circle: the denial of free will is based solely on the postulates of the dualist doctrine, or more precisely on the theory of *divine* immanence (as in Spinoza, where God is the immanent cause of beings and things). Provided one accepts these postulates, the non-existence of free will and the existence of the evil principle are demonstrated quite rigorously by one another.

The arguments used in *The *Book of the Two Principles** are drawn from Aristotle and his commentators, from orthodox theologians of the past, or contemporaries known at that time (the 12th century): Boethius, Abelard, Peter Lombard, etc., and also, as is natural, from the theorists of the 'Albanian' school, whose works have not survived to the present day. (As regards
As regards free will, the author of the *Li her* and John of Lugio agree with Western dualism.)

This can be found in the excellent study by Mr Thou-
zellier on *'relations* with *ancient and medieval* writings'
{Book of the Two Principles, Chapter III), a fairly comprehensive overview of the various influences on Doctor Eathare. When it comes simply to characterising the essence of the good God (the one and only, for Catholics)—his purity, his goodness, his intelligence, his unity (he has no attributes, or is wholly present in each of his attributes)—the Cathar makes good use of everything he knows of the (orthodox) theology of his time. But as regards the problem of free will, he is primarily interested in the theories of Aristotle, and in those of the philo-

Arab or Jewish philosophers: Al-Kindi (Lifer *de inlelleclu),* or Avicebron (Ibn Gebirol), the author of the famous **Fons* viïae* (") who drew inspiration from Aristotelianism. His reasoning relies rest almost exclusively on the concepts of 'potency' and 'act', of cause and effect, as scholasticism had borrowed them from Aristotle or his disciples: 'There is no potential capable of producing contrary effects at the same time' (Aristotle), 'good and evil are two opposites that cannot have the same cause'... 'That which exists in act must first have existed in potency' (Aristotle, Al-Kindi *(Liber de intellectu)).* 'A thing does not pass from potency to actuality except under the action of a cause... ' etc. As Hloneta of Cremona notes — with regard to the heretics of his time — Aristotle's influence appears to have been exerted on a massive scale across the whole of 13th-century Western dualism. In the **Li her*,* where the argument against free will and against monotheism takes on a more distinctly philosophical character, it appears almost exclusively.

ARISTOTELIAN ARGUMENTS

1. To the definition of free will—the free power granted to a being to do either good or evil indiscriminately—John of Lugio (or rather the author of **The Book of the* Two *Principles*)* opposes the Aristotelian theorem. 'It is impossible for a single being to possess the power to perform contradictory actions simultaneously, at one and the same time' (Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* Book 10, Chapter 1, *on* power). Therefore, there is no free will.

2. It is also impossible for anything to come into being without a cause (Aristotle, Al-Kindi, Avicebron). In the monistic hypothesis, evil has no fundamental cause; it does not exist: how could it have come into being amongst the good angels †

(••) It is also possible that John of Lugio borrowed from Avicebron *[Fons uilae]* the idea — which he considered compatible with the absence of free will — that the soul cannot *free itself,* but *may be freed* from error (or ignorance). John of Lugio believed that the cause of evil *is* error and that God *will,* in the end, *free* the souls from the bonds of error and evil.

The argument goes round in circles here: what the *author* seeks to prove is that there is an evil principle. If evil did not exist, free will would be powerless to 'choose' it—*that is to say, to* bring about its own damnation—*therefore* there is an evil principle that presents it to free will. The two proofs are interdependent. One is valid only if the other is accepted.

3. Everything that passes from potentiality to actuality requires a cause that brings it about. If there were no *cause of evil,* evil—even if it existed in potentiality—could not be actualised. Therefore, evil does not result from so-called free will, but from the necessary pressure exerted upon the creature by the evil principle. Here again, it is the existence of the Evil Principle that must be proven: the absence of free will proves it, insofar as the existence of the Evil Principle establishes ('/) that there is no free will.

4. The existence of a cause is also necessary to alter existing things (Aristotle, Avicebron). The angels would not have *passed from good to* evil if the evil principle had not determined them to do so.

5. If evil had not existed before the choice (assuming that such a choice were possible, as the Catholics maintain), this evil 'which did not exist ' (still according to the monist theory) would have had greater influence, greater effect on the angels—*since they would have succumbed* to *it*—than the Good, which has existed from all eternity. This runs counter to the well-known and self-evident proposition: 'A thing must exist in order to act' (Aristotle, Al-Kindi, *The Book of Intellect).*

6. This argument is accompanied by another of the same Aristotelian nature, which the author of **Si her** may well have found in many orthodox theologians of his time: the angels ought to have in the monist hypothesis *have chosen* the Good, which resembled them and which alone existed (according to the monists), rather than evil, which *did not resemble* them (and which had no reality). Therefore, the angels did not possess free will. They were compelled—that is to say, *deceived*—by the Devil. Here we see more clearly than elsewhere that the denial of free will *is* merely a *postulate of dualist metaphysics.* It proves the existence of the evil principle, but it is not itself demonstrated. For the essence of free will is not destroyed by error.

If the Devil took on the form of an angel of light, the angels may certainly have been mistaken as to his nature, but they nevertheless turned towards a being whom they believed to be like themselves (°®).

(•) It is important to emphasise, moreover, that, specifically in dualist systems — and particularly in that of John of Lugio — the Devil deceived the angels by *{passing himself off as Good.* This means that, for John of Lugio, corruption was explained primarily by ignorance, and ignorance by an *imperfection* in the creature. In fact, it is not clear why free will could not be exercised in a finite, limited, ignorant creature... However, one must concede to John of Lugio that free will — assuming it were possible — would necessarily lead such a creature, as St Augustine apparently believed, to yield to Falsehood, that is to say, to Evil. *Ignorance inevitably leads to evil because there* exists **a *malicious Principle*** *designed to deceive the ignorant.*

It was no doubt this problem that compelled the author of ***the *Liber**** to take a stand against the theory of Master William, a moderate dualist, towards whom, incidentally, he shows great deference. Master William starts from the idea that God — even according to orthodox theology — could only have made his angels exactly like himself (as perfect as he is). These angels therefore left much to be desired. The Devil wished *to be like God, to rival him* (Catholic Theology). **Now,** at first glance, **this** theory resembles that of John of Lugio, who states that evil arises from *the imperfection of the creature.* Undoubtedly, John of Lugio did not dwell on this *absolute impossibility*, which **is** inherent in the very essence of created being, and for which God—neither in Catholicism nor in Catharism—can be held responsible. He merely intended to emphasise the impossibility for God to make his creatures *as perfect as he would have wished*—that is to say, *perfect enough* to remain firmly attached to the Good and to true Knowledge; this is a relative impossibility arising from the fact that God is *limited in his* powers by *the* evil *principle.* This is by no means the same limitation 1

The author of ***the *Liber**** therefore easily **refutes** Master William by replying that if God cannot be held responsible for the imperfection of his creatures, neither can his angels be held responsible for an evil into which they have fallen solely because of their natural imperfection. Consequently, God would not have had to punish them. And to claim, as Master William does, that he punished them only to enlighten others and prevent them from falling into error (again, the idea of knowledge imposed by painful experience!) solves nothing: the fact remains that the former **were** unjustly **punished. And** that God caused the evil i

Master William is therefore mistaken:

1) It is false to claim that absolute imperfection (which means that angels are not God 1) necessarily compels beings, *in and of itself,* to fail. There 3 are divine entities — or divine elements — which are not equal to God and which have not fallen into corruption.

2) The punishment inflicted by God upon essences that have sinned is necessarily unjust. The true God, moreover, does not punish.

3) It is indeed the relative imperfection of the angels that is the cause of

7. Taking the perspective of his opponents, the author of **Si ber de duobus principis** shows that, in any case, God would not have consented—even had He wished or been able to do so—to grant free will to His angels. Knowing from all eternity that, because of their imperfection, they would corrupt his kingdom and that they could only corrupt it 'by free will' (according to the Catholic hypothesis), he would have been very careful not to grant it to them. Or else he would have granted it to them, even though he had foreseen their misdeeds from all eternity
and in that case He alone would be the sole author of the evil they were bound to commit. And that is unthinkable! In any event, the angels did not therefore receive free will: they sinned, compelled and forced, under the influence of the evil principle, the existence of which it is consequently impossible not to posit.

This seventh argument is merely a digression. In the second treatise on free will (De *arbitrio),* appended at the end of the Liber, but which is in fact the logical continuation of the first, the author returns to Aristotelian arguments, which he clarifies and explores in greater depth.

8. They concern the three modes of the 'power of the Good': one can *know* the Good (distinguish it from Evil), one can *will it, and* one can *choose to act upon it.* But is one free to know or not to know where the Good lies? Is one free to will it or not to will it? Are we free to do it or not to do it? No, says the Cathar. And it is Aristotle's theories that underpin his response. The man who has never done, does not do, and will never do (°[7]) Good thereby demonstrates *not* that he *has* 'chosen' *not to do it, when he could have done so,* but simply that he has never been capable of doing it. He has been able only to do evil, and it is not *possible* for him to be saved.

Their ontological weakness and their inability to clearly distinguish between Good and Evil; but this imperfection stems from the fact that the Devil has temporarily *prevented* the true God from *establishing* all His creatures in Good.

4) Neither the true God nor the angels are responsible for corruption, but only the Devil, who is powerful enough to corrupt, against their will, a portion of the angelic creatures. There therefore exists an eternal Principle of corruption and evil.

(') Hypothetically speaking, of course. But it is a fact that many people die without *ever* having done any good.

Let it not be said: he could have done good, but he did not wish to! The same reasoning applies to the will. A man has never had 'the good will' (that is, the will to do good); he does not have it at present, and he will never have it. For there is no power within him to will the Good, but only *the power to will evil.*

The same applies to true knowledge. He who has never possessed knowledge of Good and Evil (of Truth and Falsehood), who does not possess it at present, and who will never possess it, demonstrates that he has never had this knowledge even in potential; he cannot therefore be saved.

Everything therefore boils down to this principle derived from Aristotle: that *potential is revealed by actuality.* If it *is not actualised* in *reality, it is because it is absent* (Averroes). And there cannot be within man two potentialities *of the* same *nature*, one of which would remain dormant and inactive. If there is another, it is because it is of a different essence and emanates from another principle. (And it *too* manifests *itself through its effects.) It was in the form of a malignant potentiality juxtaposed with goodness that John of Lugio conceived* of *this 'I know not* what' *which the Devil added to God's creatures in order to mislead them.* Prey to error, creatures *put* this potential for evil *into action*. Thus, John of Lugio readily accounted for the fact that, at times, man obeys the good, and at times the evil, without free will. The principle set out by Aristotle: 'the same cause does not produce two contrary effects' — 'or power does not pass into action in two contrary forms' — confirmed the Cathars in their belief in the two independent Principles. There are two principles, two causes, two powers, two effects, two *temptations* (or impulses).

It would be difficult to understand the practical application the Cathars made of this theory — which they perhaps verified against the Gospel saying: 'the same tree does not bear both good and bad fruit' — unless one recalls that, for them — who did not believe in free will — the soul could only, at any given moment, *confirm* through its actions the stage of evolution it had reached. One 'wanted' to receive the *consolamenlum* (for example): *this provided proof that one had become capable of receiving it* (and therefore that one had always

possessed the power of Good, and that it had been *impossible,* from all eternity, for one not to be saved).

9. For, as our author adds: for a thing to exist, two conditions are absolutely indispensable: it must be in *the necessity of being* and in *the possibility of* not being. This logical principle obviously excludes contradiction in power and contingency: the same existing thing cannot be determined both to be and not to be. In a system such as that of John of Lugio and the author of **Si ber**, where *God is the cause of all causes* and where everything that happens *necessarily follows, down to the smallest detail, from the divine will,* and *consequently from* his *foreknowledge,* it was necessary and foreseen from all eternity that the angels would become demons, and absolutely *impossible* for them not to do so.

10. Divine foreknowledge is incompatible with free will. God cannot both do and foresee (for doing and knowing coincide in him) that the same power should produce two contrary effects, that the impossible should be possible, or that what He has foreseen (in the eternal Present) should not come to pass, since there is not a single thought of man, not a single one of his dispositions, not a single one of his 'wills' that does not depend entirely on Him. From the divine world, all contingency and all freedom are banished (°).

(") At the end of the short treatise **De url* ifrio*, the author of **Liben** also mentions an argument which I shall disregard because it is purely dogmatic and of little interest: 'Many souls,' he says, 'have been *unable* to know the Good and to do it (children who died aged four or under, the mentally disabled, etc.).' On what basis will they be judged? † On *what* merits? † It is quite evident that they did not possess free will. Even within the framework of orthodoxy, it is difficult to believe that Jesus Christ will judge souls *who have only recently come into being* (according to the Catholic theory of daily creation) and who have *lived on earth* for only a single *day,* on the basis of free will (which they did not have the freedom to exercise). And if he condemns them to eternal torment (from which they will never be able to free themselves), he thereby commits a great injustice... In *reality, there is no such thing as free will.*

(According to the Cathars, the souls of children who died in infancy were reincarnated and continued their spiritual evolution. Dying on the very day of their birth could mean, for them, that they had come to the end of their cycle of reincarnations.)

The philosophy of Catharism.

Most heresiologists regard Jean de Lugio's arguments as weak or 'outdated'. These are arguments, says Arno Borst, which the West had, a century earlier, refuted and then abandoned. 'The author,' writes Rev. Fr. Dondaine, 'plays with poorly understood notions of Aristotelian metaphysics. ' Only Ms Thouzellier, who has studied in minute detail the Aristotelian, Arabic, Jewish and scholastic (orthodox) theories from which the Cathar drew inspiration — and who does not find them contemptible — shows greater leniency towards the manner, at times quite novel, in which he employed them.

'Skillfully,' she says, 'the Cathar grafts his doctrine of service onto the doctrine of free will.' She even finds that the second chapter (the **De arbilrio**) is written 'with greater mastery than the first... •

What seems indisputable—and which Arno Borst and the Reverend Father Dondaine do not emphasise sufficiently—is that, whilst the arguments employed by John of Lugio are *outdated,* this is solely within the framework of the *monist* problem, and not within that of absolute dualism. The Aristotelian propositions, which Scholasticism usually employs to establish monism, have been turned on their head here in order to establish both the existence of the Evil Principle and the impossibility of free will. It is undoubtedly true that, for Catholic theology—which holds that God is distinct from his creatures, that he is not to be conflated with them, and that he governs them, so to speak, *from without*— free will is possible. One can even quite easily conceive that this God knows the future *without determining it by his very foreknowledge.* Jean de Lugio's arguments are, in effect, of no consequence in a metaphysics where God is *transcendent.* Let us also acknowledge that, in their desire to annihilate man before God, and not believing that the creation of a being endowed with freedom could have been the true providential purpose, John of Lugio and his disciple treat too lightly the celestial drama represented by the acquisition of this freedom, and the greater good that might have resulted from moral progress pursued *freely* and meritoriously... Undoubtedly, it is not absurd to think that God willed the fall of the angels

— and that of man — precisely in order to bring forth free beings...

But one must take dualist systems as they are

and not to judge them from a monistic perspective. In a world where all beings depend on their Creator in every respect; where the Creator knows perfectly and from all eternity the entire future—that is to say, all the causes by virtue of which it is impossible for what must happen not to happen—who *dwells* within his creatures, wills and suffers within them, and is *immanent* in them; in short, in a world of Good where pantheism reigns, and where souls, insofar as they are good, are little more than modes of the Good Principle the arguments of John of Lugio and the author of *the *Liber** are by no means 'outdated'. Indeed, they have found their point of perfection here. This is proven by the fact that we find them not only in dualist systems but in all philosophies where the creature is in God, lives in God, and moves in God. One is sometimes surprised to recognise in Bayle's *Dictionary* and even in Spinoza's ethics ideas that seem to be to have been borrowed directly from John of Lugio.

It is our ignorance that leads us to believe that futures are contingent or 'ambivalent', and that we mistake the impossible for the possible. It is true, of course, as Catholic theologians say, that we can see Peter walking in the distance without our mere gaze causing him to walk, and that God may well witness the spectacle of the world in the same way and with the same indifference. But if God is *within his creature,* if he acts in it and through it, this becomes entirely impossible, and it is John of Lugio who is right.

As J. *3.* Ampère wrote in 1867: 'If we know that a man is about to throw himself off a cliff, and if he is far from us, our knowledge cannot influence his action; but if we were holding him by the hand, how could we fail to intervene in his decision, and, all the more so, how could God be a motionless and inactive spectator of the decisions of the human soul which He has created and which He creates at every moment through that perpetual act of His power which sustains life in the universe? † How can we regard the human will as independent of that within which every spirit lives and moves?' (In John of Lugio's system, not only does God 'hold man by the hand', but He is with him 'as the sun is with each of its rays'.)

In their judgements, heresiologists therefore seem to overlook to some extent what is at stake, namely the dualist context itself and its postulates. To tell the truth, the criticism that could be levelled at John of Lugio is that he starts from one of these postulates (universal necessity) to demonstrate that an evil principle exists, and then invokes the existence of this evil principle to establish that there is no free will. Arguments against free will are valid only if one believes in absolute dualism, but absolute dualism can be founded only if one first and a *priori* denies free will.

SERVICE AND LIBERATION

The theory of 'service' clearly shows that, for absolute dualists, it is not so much the destiny of humankind that is at stake as the restoration of divine integrity threatened by the Devil. The soul's efforts to free itself from evil have meaning and value only to the extent that it is God himself who frees himself, in the soul and through it, from the temporary limitations imposed on him by the Evil Principle. This theory remains rather ambiguous in *The *Book of the Two Principles**, where one gets the impression that the author is reluctant to fully embrace all the conclusions or implications of John of Lugio's doctrine. How, if man is not free, can he serve God?

Undoubtedly, according to absolute dualism, God does not have to 'be grateful' to men for doing good, since it is He alone *who has given* them *the ability to do* so and since, without Him, 'they could do nothing at all' ('Apart from me you can do nothing', John 8:28). Nor, therefore, is it a matter for God to 'reward' merits that man might have earned by serving Him faithfully (instead of serving the Devil); man does not possess free will. Paradoxically, if the believer can serve God, it is because he is not free; it is because God is within him. God desires all the more that we fulfil what he wills (that is to say, that he may accomplish in us and through us what he wills), for it is within us that what he lacks is found'. We serve God; we are useful to him

'when we provide him with something of which he is deprived and which he desires'. Man's relationship with the good principle is therefore very different here from what it is in Catholic monism. *The salvation of multitudes* of *souls is necessary for God.* People generally refuse to consider that there may be intermediate degrees between fallible freedom (free will) and 'liberation' *(the impossibility* of doing evil). On this point, the Cathars were better psychologists than the Catholics. It is striking to see that the distinctions they drew between human beings correspond exactly to the three *modified modes of the Power of* Good: the power to *recognise* the Good, the power to *will* it, and the power to *do* it. It is evident that at each of these levels, where God progressively calls believers through *grace,* a certain freedom is attached (otherwise, what would this grace consist of†). First one acquires *the 'en-lendensa del ben',* the knowledge of good and evil, and by that very fact one is already on a far higher plane than that on which the ignorant and the unwitting perish. The originality of Catharism lies in having seen, with great insight, that the absence of freedom lies entirely in the gap separating the *will to do good* from the power *to do so,* but that liberation *begins*, in fact, with this 'good will'. 'Since it is certain that the soul *is ultimately liberated from evil,* this liberation must necessarily *be heralded* by a general, inevitable *direction* (the soul is *destined to* be *progressively* liberated).

Now, it is *a fact* that, from the moment they have acquired *the sense of the good*—and have joined the Cathar Church—believers are *at least freed from error.* They have *actualised* this aspect of the power of Good; they know what they ought to desire. If they are not yet capable of willing *to do good,* and of doing it, they can beseech God to grant them, as a grace, the power not to sin, and to escape completely from the bondage of evil. It is baffling that most heresiologists have paid no attention to the fact that these are the only spiritual paths that are in keeping with the truth of man as he is. In the *'melho-rament',* the believer *asks* the Perfect One to pray to God that he may be *led to a good end* and that, on the eve of his death, he may be made a good Christian. He is not good enough nor sufficiently liberated to *will,* by a decree of his illusory free will, to become

He is not perfect, but he is perfect enough to *aspire to be saved*. 'You would not be seeking me if you had not already found me!' In a *prayer by Calhare* that has been preserved, the faithful ask God to 'change' them, to give them a disposition such that they may ultimately *love 'what God* loves, and *desire what God wills'*. We cannot *will to will,* but we can pray to God to instil that will within us.

It is also quite remarkable that the Cathars saw no contradiction between the absence of free will and repentance (which the early Manichaeans also regarded as the beginning of liberation): they confessed their sins during a ceremony which they specifically called the *'servisi'* (or *'aparelhamenl')*. They did not believe at all that they *could have* avoided committing the sin for which they were repenting, but that, in fact—since the temptation had ceased once it had been satisfied—they were free enough from Evil to hate it. Confession was an act which revealed to them that they were beginning, *in an ideal sense*, to possess the power to do good, and above all that there were moments in their lives when the diabolical pressure eased *of its* own accord, and which they had to take advantage of. It is evident, from all we know of their religion, that the Cathars did not believe they were permitted to do as they pleased, since they did not possess free will. They knew what constituted good, and they *had the will* (though still uncertain and ineffective) to do it. As the *power of* good began to manifest itself within them, they already felt subject to the necessary evolution which was to—from reincarnation to reincarnation—set them free: for them, this was to serve God and to serve their Church.

Total liberation consisted in the power to *do* good (that is to say, to translate the power of good into action), and in the impossibility of doing evil. Only the Perfect Ones attained this. The union of the soul *with* its spirit completed in each of them the re-creation of the Angel, its restoration, whilst the illumination of the soul by the Holy Spirit—*the Principal Spirit*—ensured its return to God, its now indissoluble bond with the divine unity. From that moment on, the Perfect One became impeccable (in law), that is to say, free from evil; in other words: finally rendered incapable of doing *anything other than good.* Undoubtedly, whilst he remained incarnate, he remained

subject to the Devil's offensive attacks, but if he were to fall into sin
— '*Before the Spirit,* there *was no sin*
he had to take responsibility for it. And this sin against the Spirit—
was regarded as very serious and virtually inexpiable,
since it was committed *of one's own free will.*

The Perfect Ones were therefore in the same moral situation as the 'saints' of Catholicism: they were 'free'. But this free will had value only because it had been preceded by *liberation ('libera nos a malo').* And only by entering into death did the Perfect One gain the assurance that he was absolutely freed from evil for eternity.

Thus, whilst Catholicism and moderate dualism tend to create free beings (by free will) who ultimately attain liberation (the elect are confirmed in grace and can no longer sin), Absolute Dualism sets out, more directly, to restore the primordial Angels, that is to say, entities so united to their God through love and in such a substantial way that it is *impossible* for them to will or commit evil. —

—

ESCHATOLOGY

If there is one area where Cathar philosophy presents obscurities, uncertainties and contradictions, it is certainly that of eschatology. This is due to several reasons. In the two treatises that have come down to us, the end of time is set out in a rather haphazard manner, almost exclusively through the juxtaposition of scriptural quotations—which are, of course, less clear than a dialectical discourse—or in an overly succinct manner: the summary of Lugian eschatology left to us by Raynier Sacconi occupies only four or five lines of the **Summa de Calharis**. Furthermore, there were undoubtedly ideological exchanges between the system of the absolute dualists and that of the relative dualists, which blurred or intertwined their respective themes: this is clear in Bartholomew's *Calharis* treatise; and even more evident in the **Liure des deux principes**, whose author, as we know, sought to align himself—artificially and, it is true, almost exclusively in verbal terms—with Catholic orthodoxy. Finally, and this is the

—

most important from the perspective that concerns us — absolute dualism sometimes reveals contradictions to which the Cathar doctors may have provided a solution, but which, for us, remain difficult to explain. 'The evil principle is eternal, but it is inferior to the Principle of Good since, ultimately, it is vanquished by it.' — 'Matter, this world, had no beginning and will have no end, and yet it is said that Satan's material work will be destroyed. ' 'Evil *will have been* all-powerful in time, and yet, when eternity reigns alone, it will lose all its power.' — 'Since it was once strong enough to seize the creatures of the true God, why, in the future, would it not renew its assaults with the same alternations of success and setbacks?' ' What, then, will ultimately be the ontological status of the Evil Principle in 'evil eternity', if it is true that it must be forever disarmed and stripped of **its** natural **malevolence**?

To reconstruct the eschatology of the absolute dualists is to attempt to answer these questions, or indeed to resolve these contradictions. Stripped of its absurd myths, and considered solely in terms of its abstract propositions, their doctrine appears, all things considered, to be less convoluted than that of the so-called moderate dualists.

1) For both John of Lugio and the author of **Li fer**, there is no doubt whatsoever that the evil principle is eternal. We shall not revisit what we have previously said on this matter. However, it must be emphasised that its *eternity* in no way implies omnipotence or a power equal (?) to that of the true God. Philosophy has often conceived of the existence of realities — matter, for example — which have never had a beginning and will never have an end, and which, nevertheless, do not possess a power of being comparable to that of the divine being. The so-called contradiction in regarding the Devil as both an eternal principle and a perpetually failing, defeated entity has never existed except in the imagination of heresiologists ([3 e]). It is certain that John of Lugio

('•) The Satan of Catholicism, though he had a beginning, will never come to an end either. And for all eternity, his power—which he has exercised ***only*** **within Time—will be taken from him.**

foresees Satan's decline when he writes: 'In the end, all souls will be freed from sin and punishment' (Raynier Sacconi). 'The souls,' he adds, 'will regain their (spiritual) *minds* and bodies: there will be a resurrection of the dead, and every soul of God will receive the body that belongs to it.' That sums it all up. The defeat of the evil principle will be realised through a return to the state which, in the *First Period,* had preceded (*°) the corruption of the angels.

Whilst in Bartholomew's *Treatise* this restoration takes place in a relatively straightforward manner (God renews and purifies his kingdom: the 'new heavens', the 'new earth'... And hell this earth — abandoned by souls and good spirits, becomes, after being set ablaze, the exclusive abode of the Devil hell, where only chaos, Pain and Misfortune now reign), in Jean de Lugio's system, *where they are organised according to the same general pattern* matters are, however, more obscure owing to the dual pantheism (divine and diabolical) to which they are subject, and which holds that creatures *are co-substantial and co-eternal with their creators.* If this is the case, at what point did the corruption occur, in what did this corruption consist, and how, on the threshold of eternity, will it come to an end † Since essences are in themselves immutable, God's victory can only consist in ridding them of the evil *power—foreign to their nature*—which the Devil had added to them. In Bartholomew, the souls of the righteous are *transformed;* in John of Lugio, they are above all *purified.* The true God destroys the satanic work which had extended *the state of mixture throughout the cosmos* by restoring the essences to their original immutability and purity: it is enough for God to free them by removing from them that which they were not. The separation of being and non-being, at the level of the creature, corresponds to that which takes place throughout the universe: the divine world and the satanic world are once again *strangers to one another, radically separated.*

'2) We do not believe that absolute dualists considered it possible for the satanic offensive to be renewed (even the early Manichaeans never admitted that subversion

(••) An anteriority which, in John of Lugio, is perhaps merely • logical •.

could be a sort of cyclical phenomenon). The idea that emerges, on the contrary, from all dualist texts is that, whilst the principle of evil may have succeeded (in time, by chance or by a necessity inherent in manifestation) *in delaying the completion of divine creation,* it could not prevent the true God from *perfecting* it, precisely on the occasion of this attempt at subversion, as if the prior satanic **corruption** had been the *necessary condition* for the definitive restoration of the
celestial world.

Contrary to what some historians of Catharism maintain, the end of time does not simply restore *things to* their original state. Satan is not merely
cast out: the divine creation is profoundly transformed and brought to its point of completion (“). The transformation (through the addition of virtues or the removal of vices) undergone by souls *is* definitive and *irreversible.* They had fallen **once before because they** were unstable in their being; they will never again find themselves in that same state of spiritual and ontological weakness. There is therefore little difference, on this point, between Catholic eschatology and dualist eschatology. In both, the Devil will no longer be the prince of this world; souls will no longer be able to sin because divine Grace and their own merits (in Catholicism), or (in Catharism) the experience of suffering and the knowledge they will have acquired of the true nature of evil, will have united them with God for all eternity. In John of Lugio's system, divine creation will necessarily pass into immobility (^°), into eternal fixity, into incorruptibility

(") There is no need to emphasise, once again, the truly significant fact that, in absolute Dualism, God saves souls only *by* creating *them*.

(") However, it cannot be ruled out that some Italian Cathars may have envisaged the resumption of hostilities between the Good and the Evil Principle as a possibility, or even an eternal struggle between them. But I am not certain whether Catholic writers did not attribute this view to them in order to discredit their system. The ideas that Salvo Burce attributes, in the *Suprn s/ef/a*, to the Lombard Cathars of the **11th** century—if he has not misunderstood them—certainly stem from foolish people. I need look no further for proof than what he recounts concerning *the equality of the two gods*. They are said to be equal in power and *ingenuity* (ergo sunt pari *pote et* ingenio). If the evil God possesses such wit, he is not as evil as is claimed, for intelligence (the
'wisdom'—as Monsieur Thouzellier even adds in his translation 1!)

reason, by virtue of divine *necessity* itself, is infinitely superior to that of the evil Principle which *extends throughout all* (true) eternity: all the great cosmic mechanisms of purification — reincarnations, for example — are connected to the God of Good or work to his advantage (43)s

3) Jean de Lugio stated this expressly: 'This world shall have no end *(quod mundus isle* ounquam */iaf›ebii finem)'* (Raynier Sacconi). This idea, combined with that of the eternity of matter, was very widespread amongst the Cathars and it is found, at the beginning of the 14th century, amongst the dualists of the County of Foix (4 °). This does not refer to the renewed divine world, the 'new heavens' and the 'new earth', which are incorruptible by nature, nor to celestial matter (the 'spiritual' roots of matter that constitute the substance of good creatures and glorious bodies), but to our earthly world. Indeed, there is nothing to prevent the Earth— which, today, in the period of 'mixture', is already hell (this was the view held by all Cathars)—from becoming even more so

are 'goods'. Salvo Burce might just as well have attributed to his Cathars the view that the two gods were *equally* good.....or *equally* evil Neither Bartholomé, nor Jean de Lugio, nor the author of the *Lif›er* uttered such nonsense.

(") One can undoubtedly, as I myself did in *The *Cathar* Phenomenon*, interpret the doctrine of John of Lugio in a different light and, drawing on his theory of essences that are co-eternal with their creator, *simplify*, so to speak, the cosmic drama. It is because, from all eternity, God liberates humankind from nothingness (from corruption), and creates the world against nothingness (and not from it), that, *in time,* souls must necessarily overcome their own limitations, experience nothingness, understand (for salvation is achieved through knowledge, insofar as it frees one from error) that evil is misfortune and death, and finally live through both the time of falsehood and the time of Grace. Creatures have always been abolished, corrupted and redeemed. The historicity of the world is but a satanic mirage designed to make us prefer fleeting time to eternity, and to make us weep, like Satan himself, over that which passes away; but it is in reality in the timeless, as John of Lugio maintained, that creation — co-eternal with the Creator — is wrested from the evil principle and *finds its fulfilment* by passing through the realm of evil. For it is the same divine, absolute and unique act which allows 'nothingness' to 'rise' only to prevent it at once from becoming eternal in the *mixture*, and which, as an Orphic prayer states, simultaneously withdraws *being from nothingness* and *nothingness from being,* nothingness — or the principle of evil — thus having no *real* existence save in *the extinction of its defeat.*

(••) Many of them certainly believed that this world, as it currently stands, would last for ever.

will still exist at the end of time, when all good souls have deserted it. But by then it will have been transformed, created 'ez malo in *pejus'*—not destroyed, but reduced to the chaos of its elements. By the eternity of the world, the Cathars therefore usually mean the eternity of this material world*[formed* in hell. Does Jean de Lugio not declare that

'hell, the eternal fire and the eternal torments are in this world and nowhere else' (Raynier Sacconi) †

These eschatological perspectives are not lacking in grandeur, nor in logic (in relation to the system as a whole). Satanic matter—the evil, irrational, disordered elements—cannot be destroyed, since they form part of the diabolical substance. But corruptible organisms—the bodies created by Satan—will be dismembered. Then only *absolute disorder* will reign: the eternal whirlwind of elements subject solely to chance. The eternity of matter is the eternity of 'chaotic matter'.

The Devil will be confined within this chaos—which is his very essence; within the primordial fire from which he sprang (••). He is not 'cast into hell'—a *place that would have had to be created by God to punish him* (God never punishes!)—but *cast out* into the *outer darkness,* that is to say, *exiled into his own nature.* Not only is he stripped of the substance of the creatures he had enslaved through the Mixture, but also, as we have said above, of his *corrupting power, which was his very reason for being* (••); there is nothing left that he can corrupt! Reduced to the essence of his nature, he is a quasi-nihil (like matter itself). No longer able to punish (unjustly) anyone, he tortures himself. He embodies absolute powerlessness, absolute misery, eternal self-punishment. God is therefore innocent of the evil he would have committed by creating a being whom he would have condemned *to suffer for eternity.* He simply takes back from the Devil what he had usurped in the past, and forces him to be nothing more than what he is: the negation of being.

( ) It is not a fire ***created*** *by God to* **destroy** the earth. It is the **devil's fire.**

(••) The Devil seeks to strip God of his *creative* power; God strips **the Devil of his *corrupting* power.**

CHAPTER IV

RADICAL DUALISM: THE CATHAR MAN AND HIS MOHALE

The treatises we have just discussed do not cover the full ideological scope of Radical Dualism. Valuable insights into various specific details can be found in the documents of the Inquisition and even in the poems of certain 13th-century troubadours (Montanhagol, Peire Cardenal). But it must be acknowledged that these are most often particular, individual conceptions, formulated by relatively uneducated heretics; or moral behaviours that defy any rationalisation or systematisation, and sometimes—even after Catharism had fallen into decline—imbued with magic. The believers spoke the language of the soul and of faith—entirely intuitive and filled with obscure allusions to what, for them, could perhaps only be expressed through images and myths. Yet, *however numerous the ideas expressed, it* is clear that they can easily be traced back to one or other of the metaphysical systems we have studied, which, philosophically speaking, are essentially one and the same. It is therefore possible, on the basis of theories from the years 1230–1250, to determine the general characteristics of Western Dualism as it stood at the end of its evolution and on the eve of its disappearance.

1. THE METAPHYSICAL ANNULATION S OF MAN

Whilst radical dualism, like Manichaeism before it, has had and still has so many enemies, one must not

look far afield for the reason. It is quite simply that it appears *inhuman*. Its most striking feature has been to strip man of his entire reality as an individual. Not only does it make him a fallen being, suffering here on earth the consequences of a catastrophe that took place elsewhere and of which he has lost all memory, but also—and above all—a disjointed, torn being, living simultaneously in heaven, on earth and in hell. No doctrine in Europe has taken the metaphysical destruction of man so far. Coinciding neither with his body (made of 'foreign' satanic matter) nor with his *spirit* (which has remained in heaven and from which this very matter separates him), he is but the animic third of the angel, a soul that is disoriented and has forgotten its destiny.

Yet this 'soul' is not 'one'. It does, of course, derive from its heavenly origin an eternal, immutable essence and even a 'potentiality' for good, but the Devil has succeeded in taking root within it and, consequently, in dividing it against itself. Even more than its dislocation, *the absence of free will has served to strip away any permanent* identity. Instead of being, in effect, as she is in Catholicism, a relatively stable and autonomous substance, capable of turning 'freely' towards evil or towards good without losing any of her **unity,** she can only 'endure'. If her Spirit and divine Grace momentarily carry her above evil, she is no longer 'man', but a fragment of the divine substance in which God suffers, recognises Himself and, so to speak, is resurrected. She is in God; she is God. But if, on the contrary, the Devil triumphs within her, she becomes one with him and sinks into madness, passion, error and malice.

In the world of 'Melancholy', man is but the enclosed arena where the two principles meet, clash and limit one another. He is their common boundary. One might almost say that he exists solely to demonstrate that there are two gods. Indeed, if there were no god of Good, he would belong entirely to the Devil; if there were no god of Evil, he would belong entirely to God.

Yet, in spite of — or rather, because of — its inner conflict, this restless soul is of the utmost importance in the economy of *monotheism*. Both God and the Devil need its Eternal substance. For, if it did not take hold

of its reality—on which he feeds whilst attempting to corrupt it—the Devil would be nothing. And if the true God *were* unaware of it, and of the other souls that *form part of him,* he himself would not be saved, for he can only free himself, *in time and in the process of moni/esfalion,* from the grip of Nothingness by recovering the full essence of his being: he is necessarily the *'Saviour-saved'*.

The soul—to which man is reduced—can therefore only be saved to the extent that it is necessary for it to be reclaimed by God as his own possession, that is to say, as an angelic essence to be re-created in all its purity. The eternal law demands that it be united with him once more, just as the sun's rays are united with the sun.

2. CORRUPTION AND CREATION

Radical dualism is the result of a long meditation on nothingness and corruption (corruption arising from nothingness). God creates; the Devil corrupts. The second major dualist idea is therefore that which posits that the evil principle — that indestructible root of nothingness — seeks to *prevent the divine will from manifesting itself, from creating.* For the Occitan and Italian Cathars, the Devil had succeeded in corrupting divine creation from the very beginning, *since it is imperfect;* for Jean de Lugio, *who* was more systematic, *it is the angelic* manifestation that he succeeded in 'dislocating' and perverting. There is only a difference of degree between these two doctrines: but Jean de Lugio's, being more logical and rational by imposing upon *all* that *is created* by the true God the malignant influence which the Albanians usually confined, in time and space, to a 'historical' catastrophe and to this world, has the merit of *bringing to the fore the philosophical idea which animates Western dualism:* in mythical form, it expresses the fact that *Satan* is *not merely* the *prince of* this *world, but of the entire creation[eslalion.* By stepping out of his absolute unity, it is God who, in reality, was the first to invade Satan's virtual domain, since he willed (from all eternity) to leave his infinite transcendence in order to *create finite essences.* But as soon as he steps out of his unity, as soon as he scatters the

essences and limited beings — however eternal, incorruptible and consubstantial with Himself He may have intended them to be — the evil principle intervenes to thwart Him, to compel Him to spatialise and temporalise His own creation: he interposes nothingness between the Creator and His manifestation; in short, he attempts to annihilate God *as He expresses Himself* in *beings that are not Him.* It is for this reason that Radical Dualism places far greater emphasis than other philosophies on the *suffl* of God. The Passion of Jesus Christ — expiatory in traditional Catholicism — becomes, in radical dualism, the expression of a metaphysical necessity: it is the entire Divinity that is crucified in the manifested world, because it is impossible for it *to create* without having to endure, *in* its *creatures*, the evil of limitation and imperfection, and to endure the misfortune of diabolical corruption.

This in no way implies that the true God is in the slightest threatened in His Absolute nature and in His transcendence. The Devil can do nothing against God's Unity, His infinity or His eternity, but he can do everything—or almost everything—*against* His *work.* Between God and his manifestation, between *the sun and its* rays, he inserts a 'flaw', as if he wished to drive the supreme Being back into his transcendence and force him to surrender the 'beings' to him. Not only is the true God thwarted as Creator—since He cannot help but create—but also, as we have said, in that He is compelled to separate Himself even more radically than He would have wished from the good created essences which the Devil temporalises and materialises.

3. L DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE

If proof were needed that the two principles are not equal, we would find it in the highly significant fact that no absolute dualist has ever situated the antagonism between God and the Devil, between Good and Evil, between Being and Nothingness, anywhere other than in the manifested world, that is to say, in time and space (which must one day come to an end). Not only in his Absolute, in his causal *Grund*, is the true God immune

from any fall into the relative, from any incarnation (1), but He takes up, so to speak, the diabolical challenge and defeats the devil on his own ground. Having lost his creation, he redeems it, recovers it. He will resolve the contradiction exploited by the Devil: *he will bring his creation to completion,* make it perfect, and in this new externalisation of Himself, beings will be both distinct from him and inseparable from him.

How is it possible that, according to Absolute Dualism, the Devil's corruption of creation should become an opportunity for the true God to perfect his creation, *as if* this cosmic drama had been nothing more than a necessary stage in the Plan of Providence? *This is because all the fateful mechanisms that predestine the soul, Goodness, good creatures and God Himself (as Creator) to be 'preserved' or 'saved' are always contained within the* guiding *transcendence and* have *never* left *the plane of the Absolute.* God's decisions, will and actions — whether more or less related to the deeds and actions of the Devil or of man as recounted *in the Old Testament,* all this belongs to the manifested realm and not to divine eternity... That which is truly God is never manifested nor bound by time, but falls within a sort of *Necessity* which, in the long run, compels all things to contribute to the Good. The God of whom Sean de Lugio speaks—*the One* who has *never been seen on Earth*—is one and the same as His own law, and the absence of free will in man is merely the temporal consequence of this necessity in God, without which Good would never overcome Evil. For, after all, by what mechanism, in the absolute dualism where the Devil is so powerful, would man and the entire spiritual realm ultimately be redeemed, since neither angel nor man can do anything of their own accord if the Cause that predestines them to Salvation had not resided from all eternity within the divine absolute? The salvation of souls takes place according to a *general and immutable process* that lies far above the struggle between Good and Evil.

1) Thus, 'God enlightens every person who comes into this world'. However deep the abyss into which the soul is cast—

(1) Jean 'le Lugio' places the beginning of corruption *as close as possible* to the Divine Absolute, that is to say, in Jesus Christ. But Jesus Christ, a creature of God, *is too close* to this Absolute not to benefit from an abundance of being.

cast, there is a light of goodness which, paradoxically, determines it to be free — or to wish to be liberated. It is evident to the Dualists that this law does not emanate from God *in* so far *as He is present in His creatures, but in so far as He is the One* who brings all beings back to unity.

2) The struggle between the two principles, in which the human soul is at stake, is inevitably unequal, because the spirit, ever engaged in divine unity and immune to separation, can always impart to even the most darkened soul a certain knowledge of the Good. Historians of Catharism usually downplay the role of the spirit in this liberating process: yet it is evident that, whilst it does not immediately grant **the soul** the power to free itself from evil, it does ensure the possibility of choosing being over nothingness, truth over falsehood, and stirs within it the desire to be reborn into true life by receiving spiritual baptism. In any case, the fact that part of the angelic composition was *preserved from* corruption testifies to the omnipotence that enables God to increase goodness infinitely wherever it exists, but above all to the necessary and absolute nature of providential order.

3) It is above all the Law of Reincarnation that emanates from the *transcendent* reality of God. This is proven by the fact that the Cathars were **never** able to say—let alone our heresiologists—*whether it was of God or of the Devil.* Undoubtedly, it governs—in order to liberate him—the entire destiny of man and is part of the manifested world, but its significance *transcends the manifested,* **and it itself** 'changes sign'. Death, incarnation in matter, the fall into time—all this was willed by the Devil. But divine necessity demands that reincarnations fulfil a function that is, if not expiatory, at least *purifying.* This is the finest example one can give of the recreation of all things by God (*a second-degree* creation, which can obviously only take place within timeless perspectives). Diabolical works fade away before the Absolute. Satan believes he is putting the true God to death, but the death of Christ becomes a sacrifice *(on the* higher *plane*), and the sacrifice, a victory. Satan believes he is trapping souls in the cycle of reincarnation; in truth, he compels them to experience in their flesh that evil is misery, and, in spite of himself, he sets them free.

4) The Devil's work is all lies and error; men and angels have been deceived. But the revelation of freedom, as we have seen, does not belong to the temporal realm: it comes from on high. *'The light that enlightens* every *man* coming into *this world* will be revealed to mankind even more perfectly in the person of Him *who* is *not of this world,* who does nothing of His own accord, but who is the truth, the way and the life'. One cannot deny that God's salvific action, within absolute dualism, is infinitely more effective than the diabolical intervention in evil. What proves this is that—necessarily enlightened by the Word, by His Spirit, by the example of Jesus Christ, by the experience of reincarnations, and by the reception of spiritual baptism—the soul always ends up *desiring to renounce the satanic body and to unite itself with His Spirit.* It is necessary from all eternity that all souls should be saved.

5) Thus, the essential teaching of dualist philosophy can be summarised as follows: when God temporarily loses His power over creation, it is a necessity oriented towards the Good—which is none other than God Himself—*that takes His place.* The eternally hidden God is known to us here on earth only through the ideas of *truth,* (purifying) justice and, above all, charity. We can love Him only to the exact extent that we aspire to see the creation—*interrupted by the Devil*—come to fulfilment within *us*, and consequently to witness our own transformation 'from good to better'. Predestined from the very beginning to be saved, souls are *necessarily* drawn towards divine unity. The greatness of humankind lies in its ability to cooperate in the work of recreation *to the extent that God frees it from evil.* With every grace it receives, it casts off that which prevented it from recognising the presence of the Spirit within itself. It is no longer free to love evil; soon it will no longer be free to do so.

Divine creation thus continues and is brought to completion. The devil will be vanquished on the very plane of manifestation. By reuniting in heaven with his ' ' spirit, with which he had already been united through *consolation* , and by regaining his spiritual body (the ideal principle of individuation), man once again becomes the Angel. No longer the feeble angel , lacking self-assurance and capable of failing by allowing himself to be swayed by the Devil , whom he had

in the first creation — but an angelic essence now *indissolubly* united with its God. One cannot overemphasise this point: the new creation, as envisaged by absolute dualism, establishes the definitive union of all beings with one another, and of all with God and in God, of which John's *'Life'* speaks. It does not restore man to the angel, but man to God or the angel to God. *Creation is God Himself (C).* There is no longer any place for Satan.

Presumably, most men and women **of** the **13th** century did not ask themselves so many questions; they had to live their everyday lives—when they were Cathar believers—just as Catholics did. Is it not, then, somewhat futile to wonder what the mindset of an absolute dualist might have been?

Yet it is inconceivable that the finest of these men and women — instructed by their pastors — should not have occasionally reflected on the situation and fate of their souls, or should not at least have felt — affectively, emotionally — even if only on the occasion of *the 'melioramentum'* — the anguish of the future.

The Cathars knew that they were 'angels'. Perhaps they felt in their very flesh and in their hearts, as a matter of self-evident truth, that they were imperfectly incarnate and, above all, that nothing in creation or within themselves *was truly complete.* Historians have often believed they detected in medieval people a certain emotional instability, a tendency to shift without transition from hatred to
pity, from terror to hope, and an excessive emotionality... Perhaps, among the Cathars of the 12th century, this emotional
was heightened by their sense of
'floating between heaven and earth', and by the certainty in which they found themselves

(') Some Cathars — **particularly** amongst the moderate dualists — have at times maintained that diabolical subversion had forced the true God to *divide* Himself into *three* (the Trinity) and that — at the end of time — God would once again become *One.* This profound idea cannot be attributed to radical Dualism, which has always upheld the absolute unity of the transcendent God; yet it is very much in the spirit of **Catharism.**

Many of them *believed* that, in truth, neither their bodies nor their minds *belonged to them*. Until the advent of Saint Thomas, who united the soul with the mind (the intellect) and the soul with the body, as if, precisely at that time, the human composite had truly become 'substantial', all Christians—but more particularly the dualists— —seem to have lived with a sense of their own lack of reality and in terror of the Devil; and probably also with a desperate desire to cling to the Spirit, as many once in the 12th century, in the manner of the Averroists, as belonging common to all men. Yet most of them nonetheless felt that their body, the Devil's handiwork, was very real and all-powerful, and that their soul, fragile and changeable, was subject to it... The most mystical among them must have felt dread at this and, after sinning, remorse...

What helped them to live with a certain degree of optimism was, above all, the assurance their religion gave them that they were *in no way responsible* for the sins that Satan committed in them and through them, and that, moreover, they still had *plenty of time* to transform themselves or be transformed — and to free themselves. For them, not everything was decided in a single lifetime, but across many successive lives. One gets the impression that reincarnation was feared neither by those who loved life passionately, nor by those who hoped to purify and perfect themselves through it....

The supposed state of neglect in which the Church is said to have left ordinary believers has been greatly exaggerated; in reality, the Perfect Ones often reminded them of their presence and urged them to be at least very attentive to the progress that Good or Evil was making within them... And it is all too often overlooked that the power of Good is awakened only through its effects; that whilst the certainty of not being free brings reassurance, the knowledge of Good and Evil, combined with the inability to do good, causes unease. The emergence, within their souls, of evil temptation and divine temptation—their experience, in turn, of the presence of the Devil and that of God—must have deeply troubled the believers, but also enlightened them. That is why so many of them *scrupulously observed the rites of their church* to prove to themselves that they were now in a position to *hope* for salvation.

Almost all of them undertook to receive the consolamentum at the hour of their death... Thus, for believers, life was a sort of waiting and preparation *(the 'aparelhamenl'):* it consequently lost much of its significance. True life was still to be lived... eternally.

The moral code of Radical Dualism differs little from that of Moderate Dualism — nor, all things considered, from that of Catholicism... We shall therefore focus only on the essential points — where this moral code more specifically reflects the tenets of absolutist philosophy.

The ontological difference that corruption — and liberation — created between beings corresponded to the well-known division into *believers* and *non-believers.* Believers, as we have just seen, were bound by nothing except to wait for goodwill to manifest itself within them, and for Divine Grace and Time to do the rest. At every stage of their development, they could only observe the changes wrought within them by this Grace. The Perfect Ones, by expressing their desire to join the Cathar Orders, were themselves demonstrating that they had finally attained a sufficient degree of liberation or purification to enable them to devote themselves to the life of the spirit and to abstinence.

We shall not recount here the virtues they were required to display or the mortifications they imposed upon themselves. Suffice it to say that these were all aimed at freeing them from evil, from the devil and, as far as possible, from *their own bodies.* The body is lust, it is hatred, and it is *fear.* The Perfect Ones were therefore required to abstain from all carnal acts, to fast frequently, to refrain from eating meat, *but also to demonstrate courage* (for courage is the metaphysical virtue par excellence, the one that determines all the others, the one that conquers death).

Of course, they were not to kill under any pretext—neither man nor animal—and they forbade themselves from lying, which, although all sins were equal in their eyes, was, along with lust, the most *demonic* of all.

The Perfect One was, in principle, 'liberated'. We have seen that the presence within him of his Spirit, and the influence of the Spirit—

—not only brought him the knowledge of Good, but also stripped him of the *power* of evil. This means that, when faced with impulses or temptations coming from God and from the Devil, he had the power not to follow the evil ones. In theory, it was impossible for him to sin.

Dualist morality rests essentially on the existence of these *two temptations,* representing the hold that the true God and the false God exert over the human soul. This *dual* opposition is, of course, only possible within dualism, and it characterises it. (For the Vaudois, for example, there is only one temptation, which comes from the Devil, and which is exercised only with God's permission.) Among the Cathars, there is a temptation from God that leads to Life, and a diabolical temptation that leads *to* death ((a *fenïacio de Dio va a vita e la lenlaccion del Diavol a morl)* (*). Nothing could better illustrate the opposition between being and nothingness, Life and Death, which lies at the heart of all dualism.

The ordinary believer can only implore the divine temptation that is to lead him to salvation and pray to God to spare him from the diabolical temptation ([4]) or to give him the strength to overcome it. The Perfect One, by virtue of his spiritual evolution, receives only the divine temptation; it comes to him from his Spirit and from the Holy Spirit, and he rejects satanic temptation, since, in theory, he is no longer capable of doing evil. (For if he did not reject it, he would sin gravely against the Spirit, since he has become free and accountable, and everything would have to start afresh for him.)

The Ethics of Absolute Dualism corresponds exactly, in practical terms, to the requirements of metaphysics. The work

) *A Commentary on the Paler,* Th. 4'enckeleer, *Revue belge de philosophie and History, vol.* XXXI X, 1961. — Anne Jolliot, *The* Communities *of the of the high valleys bordering the 15th and 16th centuries,* Montpellier, 1972.

(•) Diabolical temptation is itself twofold: there is a 'carnal' temptation which corresponds to our physical needs (hunger, thirst) — although, through endurance, it can be overcome; the other is more purely diabolical; it is that which springs from the heart *(error,* wicked thoughts, hatred and the like)... *Riluel cn-thare.*

divine dualism consists in creating not beings free to do good and evil, and consequently capable of serving the Devil — but beings who *are utterly incapable of doing evil.* Creation is, in unfailing eternity, incorruptible and 'one' in the One.

APPENDICES

CHAPTER XIII
OF THE BOOK AGAINST THE MANICHAEANS

(Liber contra Manicheos, 1222–1223 †) by
Durand of Huesca (1)

This chapter aims to establish the true meaning of the word *'nihil'* and to refute the interpretation put forward by ~~the~~ heretics the — 'treacherous ones'
they usually gave him. It is of great importance because it provides us with —indirectly but accurately about how the— Cathars conceived the nature of the two Principles and the two creations, and about the relationship between the being of Evil and the being of Good. This is therefore not merely a question of grammar, but concerns the kind of reality attributable to being-in-Evil. (It is known that the Dualists sometimes referred to *'nihil'* (an adverb used as a noun) or 'ni/tifum' (a noun) not as absolute nothingness, but as an entity that *is evil by its very nature* and possesses less being than the incorruptible spiritual realities (created by the True God).

This chapter was published in French by M. le Thouzellier in the **Annales du Midi**, No. 99, December 1970: **Medieval Legal Texts* in *Languedoc Concerning the* Meaning *of the Term 'nihil'**. However, apart from the fact that this translation contains many errors and inaccuracies, it does not appear that its author always fully grasped the general meaning of *the* *Li her *c0nfra fanicheos**, nor, above all, that of the Cathar treatise which is cited and refuted therein. A new translation was therefore necessary.

Durand de Huesca's text is never particularly profound, but as it is subtle, specious, childish and convoluted, it

(1) Text in: Christine Thouzellier, **Une* somme anti-culture, ou *Liber contra Mariicheos de Durand de Huesca**, Leuven, 1964.

sometimes presents passages that are difficult to interpret in **relation** to Cathar thought. We **have always endeavoured** to explain them in their own right and in terms of **their** dialectical **orientation**. Furthermore, this chapter deals with two words — *'nihil'* and 'ni/iifum' — which do not have the same meaning for Catholics as they do for Cathars, so **that**, unless one pays very close attention, it is never clear in which sense — heretical or orthodox — they should be understood in the quotations in which they appear. For the sake of clarity, we translate the texts taken from the Scriptures *in the Cathar version* whenever Durand of Huesca quotes them specifically to substitute his interpretation for the heterodox one. In all other cases, we translate the scriptural quotations as **the Catholics** understood **them**.

It is also for the sake of clarity that we **have** not hesitated to interrupt Durand de Huesca's exposition from time to time with 'parentheses' in which, under the heading: *'fa réri/aôfe pensée calhare',* we summarise the anti-dualist argument and attempt to reconstruct the metaphysics of Catharism, as it **emerges** from **the more or** less **valid** criticisms levelled against **it**.

THE OPINION OF THE PERFIDIOUS REGARDING THE TERM 'C NIHIL' *

Thanks to the spirit of wisdom at work within us, we have, in these twelve chapters, dispelled the artificial (°) disguises (°) that the Manichaeans have diabolically added to the Holy Scriptures (') and by means of which they poison the consciences of a great many people. But now, in the name of Him who said to the Apostles: 'I myself will give you
a tongue (a 'mouth') and wisdom which none of your
opponents will be able to resist or contradict' (Luke — P7, *1 fl),* let us turn to the rest of their treatise. And regarding the negative term *'nihil',* which they keep harping on about, let us present (our refutation). After the introductory pages (°), they begin as follows

(') Nucum (Thouzellier's translation: fa /timée).
(•) Fabricated out of thin air (†)
(•) 'With the help of the Holy Scriptures' (Thouzellier's translation).
(•) Or: following the previous passage (Thouzellier's translation).

THE COMPILATION OF THE ANICHÉENS
(Cathar text)

'That truly what is in the world, that is to say: of the world, may be called "nothing" *(nihil),* is declared by the Apostle when he says – "We know that an idol is
'nothing' in the world (quiz *nihil est idolum* in *mundo – 1 Cor. 8:4).*' And he says again: 'If I had the gift of prophecy, and understood all mysteries..., if I had the fullness of faith, a faith that could move mountains, yet did not have love, I would be *nothing (nihil) — (1 Cor. 13:*P).' From this it follows that if the Apostle, without love, is 'nothingness'—everything that exists without charity is nothingness *(nińif).* That is why Isaiah also says: 'All the nations are (before Him) as though they were not *(quasi* non sínf): they count for Him as nothing and emptiness (•) *{el quasi nihilum el inane repulale sunt — Isa.* 40:17). ' The Psalmist also says: 'You will lead the nations into nothingness' *(Ps. 58:9).* And he says elsewhere: 'The wicked are led into nothingness in His presence' *(Ps. 14:4).*

In *Ezekiel,* it is said to the Prince of Tyre: 'You have become nothing (ni/iif) and you shall not be for ever.' And Isaiah declares:

'Behold, you are nothing *(de n ihilo)* and your work comes from *that* which *is not* (') : a abomination be upon him who chooses you' *(Isa.* 41:24). And John, in the Gospel: 'Without Him was nothing ***(nińiï)*** — (1:3)."

If, then, all evil spirits, wicked men and all things *that can be seen* in this world are nothing *(nihil)* because they exist without charity, they were made without God. It is not God who made them, because without Him was made that which is nothing *(nihil).* And the Apostle bears witness to this:
'If I have not love, I am nothing *(nihil sum)*' — (1 Cor. 13:2).

(•) • 'To him, they are worth nothing and are empty' (Translation from the *Jerusalem Bible j.*

(') • Yet, you are nothing and your works **are nothing** • (**'**from the *Jerusalem Bible*

).

REPLY (BY DURAND BY THE HOUSE OF THE MANICHIANS)

But we, enlightened by Him who, having dispelled the darkness, • and called the light 'day' (Gen. 1:5) and illuminates from within every person who enters the intelligible world *(inlel-teclualem)* ( ), let us dispel the most repulsive smoke (spread by the heretics) by the breath of the Holy Flame of the Holy Spirit.

There are those who think that this term *'nihil'* corresponds to *some reality,* that is to say, to a corporeal or incorporeal *substance*, and *to all visible creatures.* This is the meaning that the 'Manicheans'—that is to say, the modern Cathars who dwell in the dioceses of Toulouse and Carcassonne, along with their accomplices—have ascribed to it in their antiphrastic compilation (•). Others say (in the same vein) that sin or the 'idol' is nothing (' °) *ţnihil)* — some even that the Devil himself is *nihil* ('i) (nothing). With all due respect, which is due only to orthodox authors, we must now vigorously refute their opinions.

If sin, idols, the devil, wicked men, and everything that exists without charity—if all these things are but nothingness *(nihil)*—then it must be understood that this 'nothingness' would have been to the Apostle's advantage without charity. He says in the epistle: 'If I were to give away all my possessions to feed the poor, if I were to hand over my body to be burnt, yet do not have love, *it would be* of *no* benefit to *me' (Nihil mihi* prodest — *1 Cor.* 13:3). (Which is absurd!) Let the Marcionites ('•) tell us, if they

(•) An 'intellectual' (Trans. Thouzellier). One can understand • Liii (God), who comes into the world • (Trans. Thouzellier). (•) Which runs counter to the truth.

('°) Saint Augustine and the Augustinian apocrypha often state that the idol is uii nihil, in a context **which** clearly shows **that they regard it as a *subsfnnïi/* and nothingness as** a **thing** •.

(") **Lactantius, Origen, Saint Augustine, etc.**

(") Marcion (early 2nd century). His disciples professed a form of relative dualism with which that of the Cathars sometimes seemed to merge.

are capable of, what then was this 'nothingness' *{nihil}* which, without charity, was of use to the Apostle I

Likewise, if, as the Manichaeans claim, heaven, earth, the sea, and all things seen therein are nothingness, *the Apostles* could have *done this without Christ,* since Christ himself tells them: '*Sine* me *nihil* poïesfis *facere*' *(John* 15:5): 'Without me you can do "nihil", that is to say: that which is nothing.'

Likewise, if sin, idols, sinners and all that is without charity are nothingness (nihil), we must admit that the Apostle, together with his brothers, *brought all this* into *the world.* Does he not, in effect, say to Timothy: 'For we have brought all this— fe nihil into the world. 'There is no doubt that we can take nothing away from it' (1 *Tim.* 6:7).

Likewise, if wicked men, sin, idols and all that is without charity are nothing, it follows that *all these things must be* 'new', since Solomon said: 'There is nothing new under the sun!' *{Nihil sub sole novum!)* — *{Eccl.,* 1:10). If everything that is without charity is nothing, we must also consider that this nothingness is *beneath the* earth, since, speaking of the Lord, the blessed Job says: 'It is He who has spread out the North over the void (super *vacuum)* and suspended the earth over nothing (nihil)' (Job 26:7).

Likewise, if wicked men, the devil, idols, sin and all that is without charity are nothing, it must be understood that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, during the forty days and forty nights in which he fasted in the wilderness, consumed them all, since the blessed Luke affirms in the Gospel: 'that he fasted for forty days and forty nights, and that during those days *he* ate the bread of *angels' (manducavil niń* if) (*Luke* 4:2). Yes! If heaven, earth, the sea and other things that can be seen in this world and which lack charity *are* nothing, as the heretics have maintained, the Son of God devoured in those *forty days* all sinners, sins, idols, the devil, the earth and all that is seen. 1 What, then, did he eat during the rest of the time he spent on earth, if during that time of fasting he ate such things and in such great quantities! Let the heretics be silent! May their words, full of falsehood and ridicule, be banished from the hearts of those who listen to them!

This is the nth verse: *'El* sens *mi a élé fail* fe néant (l•).' O blessed John, what you have said, you have said well and in accordance with the truth ('And without him nothing was made'). But if you had said what the disciples of Marcion and your enemies profess, you would certainly have spoken wrongly and in a manner contrary to the teaching of our most holy Master. Christ says, indeed, to the Jews: 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that *I Am,* and that of myself
'I bring into being nothing' (nihil) — (John 8:28). I affirm, O Apostle of God, that you have spoken wrongly if 'nihil' has the meaning that the heretics ascribe to it here. Let them tell us, then, if they know, which of the two spoke the truth—Christ or John: for Christ said,
'I myself bring nothing *into being (nihil)'* and John: '*Without Him there*
/aïï *the* néonf.' If everything that is without charity is nothing *(nihil)* or sin, *and if Christ has created it, then* this very nothing could not have been created without Him ('•')!

But let us set aside these ambiguities, which we have only touched upon to undermine the letter and spirit of the Cathar doctrine and to show to those who wish to read and understand that it must be regarded as contemptible; and let us prepare to set out in writing the true and sound meaning that must be given to the expressions whose nature the heretics have corrupted.

THE **TRUE CATHAR THOUGHT**

The brief compilation by the Manichaeans is very clear and presents no difficulty. The word 'nihil', in John 1:5, *Paul 1 Cor. 6:4* and *1* Corinthians *13:2,* and in *Ezekiel 28:19,* has, for the author of the Cathar Treatise, the function of a noun: 'de nihil'; and it expresses a reality that is at once nothingness and something, that is to say: an existence *that is in no way* diminished.

It should be noted that this word was *only* used in this way by the Cathars—and consequently corresponded for them to the notion of 'relative nothingness'—in John 1:3 and

('•) According to Durand of Huesca: 'And without him nothing was made.'
(") Durand of Huesca contrasts the words of Christ with those of John (as **he believed** the Cathars understood them).

verses 8:4 and 13:2 of St Paul (1 *Corinthians*) ('°). Everywhere else, as we shall see, it functions as a negative adverb, and is equivalent to: 'not' or 'nothing' ('He *ate nothing').*

As for the word niùifum (i), a noun, which Durand de Huesca and his modern editor tend to conflate erroneously with nihil ('°), it can only mean nothingness *{'inlerire non in nihilum, sed* in *suas partes',* as Cicero said: 'to perish not by being annihilated, but by dissolving into its constituent parts').

It poses **no** grammatical problems. In Isaiah 40:17, in the *Psalms* 58:9 and 14:4, and in Isaiah 41:24, it expresses absolute nothingness or quasi-nothingness (relative nothingness). In the latter case, it has roughly the same meaning as 'nihil' (used as a noun) and refers to an entity that is less 'existent' than the incorruptible essences of the celestial world.

Apart from two or three speculative personal interpretations by Durand de Huesca, it is evident that the Roman orthodox translation of the scriptural texts is just as tenable and indeed far more plausible in itself than that proposed by the Cathars. But that is not the issue at hand here. What interests us is to ascertain: 1) what exactly the Cathar interpretation of the texts in question *consisted of*; 2) whether the Cathars *were justified, within the framework of their* dualism, in *referring* to the interpretation prevalent in orthodoxy.

We have just seen what it consisted of. We shall see it more clearly later on, as Durand de Huesca brings it to light whilst attacking it. As for the second question, we shall answer that the Cathars believed themselves authorised to use *'nihil'* as a noun for two main reasons: firstly, because even in classical Latin, 'nihil' functions as both an adverb and a noun; and secondly, and above all, because many 'orthodox' authors — notably Saint Augustine and the Augustinian 'apocrypha' — had before them *successfully nominalised* the word (and the concept) in John 1:3 and in other texts referring more or less directly to that verse. It

(") In fact, also in John 8:54; 'tu *mia gloria es* nienfz' *{Bible of Légon,* Clédat ed., p. 176).

('•) 'Nihil' is indeclinable: *'Ad ni/tii'*: towards (relative) nothingness. *'Ad nihilum':* towards nothingness (absolute or relative, as the case may be).

It is certain that, in contexts drawing on: *'El sine i pso [aclum est* ni/tif', *'nihil* facto' means, for Saint Augustine*: 'I bring about* (relative) *nothingness*', that is to say, sin and evil, and not: 'I do nothing at all!'

It is therefore not possible to agree with Mr Thouzellier's assertion that Durand de Huesea's exegesis is the only acceptable one and that one *cannot* translate *Sine *ipso [aclum est nihil** as 'Without him, (relative) nothingness was made' (''). Cathar dualism was evidently determined to give a dualistic meaning to *John's* verse. And it was able to do so without contradiction.

By refuting the Cathar thesis, Durand de Huesca enables us to reconstruct its theoretical content implicitly. He attacks it on both a grammatical and a philosophical level. On a philosophical level, it is the word **nihilum** that troubles him most, for, whether he likes it or not, this word does indeed mean *'nothing'* in scriptural texts (with, naturally, various nuances). He extricates himself from this difficulty by consistently interpreting this 'nothingness' not as a nothingness *of being* (the ontological zero or being tending towards zero), but as a *nothingness of value* (moral, practical, material, etc.). For him, **nihilum** does not signify the absence or *diminution of being,* but rather, within a given existent — *which in no case 'becomes nothing'* — a diminution or loss of moral value, practical power, potential for power, wealth or glory, etc. For Durand de Huesca, ‹ 'I am in nothingness' can only mean in the scriptural texts: 'I have lost the power to do evil', or 'I have been unable to do what I wanted to do', or 'I am of no use to myself' (for my own salvation, for example). This is Durand de Huesca's sole central idea; he maintains it unwaveringly throughout his treatise.

In the light of his theory, *it* becomes *clear* what the Cathars' view was. It was exactly *the opposite.* For the Cathars, *nothingness was not a lack or diminution of moral or practical value, but the absence or diminution of the soul.* They

(1 ') *Medieval controversy* in *Languedoc concerning the meaning of the word nifti/,* Annales du Midi, 1970, no. 99, vol. 80.

believed, quite naturally, like all Christians and Durand of Huesca himself, that the world of evil *was worthless,* but they also and above all asserted that, if it was worthless, *it was because it possessed less being than the world of God. Nihil calhare has affected the being.*

In the pages we have just translated, it is primarily *on a grammatical level* that Durand de Huesca attempts to undermine the Cathar interpretation of 'ni/ti'. Subsequently, he will return to the meaning of this word, examine its etymology and persist in reducing its meaning to that of: 'not... something',
'not... nothing'. But for the time being, he confines himself to showing that, if one translates niùif in the scriptural texts as *'neanl'* (and not as *'not... nothing',* or *'nothing... ne'),* one ends up with an *absurdity.*
This reductio ad absurdum will be repeated on almost every page of his Treatise. Yet it is utterly untenable, for the very simple reason that in most of the texts he cites
— — as shown by the so-called Lyon Bible (' ') — the Cathars did not translate *nihil* as néan/, but, like everyone else, as *ne. rien.*

In reality, there are only three instances where, in the *Noureati Testa-ment in the Provençal language,* 'niùif' is rendered as *'néant'* — and this translation — even if it is not legitimate — *in no way* leads *to a contradiction:*

1) *'In* the beginning *was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'* (John 1:3 — Clédat, p. 155). 'And without him was made nothing.'

2) *Sabem que nienlz es la ydolas el mon (1 Cor.* 8:4 — Clédat, p. 362). We know that the idol is nothing in the world
{1 Cor., 13:2 — Clédat, p. 370).

3) *Mas carilal no aia: nienlz so* (2 *Cor.* 13:2 – Clédat, p. 370). But if I have no love, I am nothing!

Everywhere else — and this alone is enough to refute Durand de Huesca's childish arguments — the Lyon *Bible* translates nihil (ne... rien, rien... ne) as *re.* no:

(•) Z,c *Nouveau* Z'e.sfamcnf *translated in the 17th century* ***into a*** **long** Provençal version... ed. Glédat, 1887.

1) In St Paul, still on the subject of idols, *1 Cor.* 13:2 *(nihil mihi prodest): 'Mas carifaf* non *auzei, re no profeila a mi'* (Clédat, p. 370): 'But if I have no love, nothing profits me.'

2) In the verse from John 13:5, on which Durand of Huesca makes such a heavy-handed mockery *(nihil* pofesfis *facere). Quar senes* mi *ze no podelz fax* (Clédat, p. 190): For without me you can do *nothing.*

3) In Luke 4:2 *{Et in* iffis *diebus* niftif *man-ducauii): E* re no *manjec* iii *bec en aquels dias* (Clédat, p. 106): And he neither ate nor drank anything during those days.

4) Also in *Timothy (1 Tim.* 6:7) *(Nifiif insu-limus* in hoc *mundum, hand dubium quia* nec majerre *quid* possumus: **For** we bring *nothing into this world, and there is no doubt that we can take nothing out of it* (Clédat, p. 439): **For** we bring nothing into this world, and there is no doubt that we can take nothing out of it. (To be more precise, the Cathar has translated 'nihil' here as 'dequna re'.)

5) Finally, in John 8:28 *(A me i pso facto nihil): 'Adonc* conoisserefz *qu'en mezeis so, e de mi meleis* no *falz alcuna causa'* (Clédat, p. 174): 'You will know that I am myself, and that of my own accord I do nothing.' (Same observation as before: *'nihil',* nothing, has been rendered as 'afcun‹i causa': no thing.)

It is worth noting that it was certainly a deliberate choice on the part of the Cathar to translate 'ni/iif' as *'ntent'* in John 1:3 and in the two passages from Paul *in 1 Corinthians,* concerning idols and *charity.* It would have been just as easy for him to write, as he did everywhere else:

E senes lui alcuna causa no *es faila...*

Sabem que la idola no *es alcuna causa* (or: *deguna* re) *al me...*

But let there be no love, and let there be no *thing — or no thing at all —...*

But in John 1:3, it would have been a serious misinterpretation on the part of the Cathars to translate **nihil** as *afctino *causa no...*,* since they believed precisely that 'things' had been made without God. — And in the passages quoted from Paul, it would have been absurd to render *'nihil'* as 'aicuna *causa* no...', since it is quite certain that the idol is 'something

'thing' and that one who lacks charity is not for that reason deemed to be in a state of *absolute* non-existence.

Thus, for the Cathars, the word and the thing are perfectly aligned—'niùif' (used as a noun) and *'nihilum'* always signify for them 'something' that lacks ontological fullness: negation ('•').

EXCERPT FROM THE ANTI-CATHAR ARGUMENTATION BY DURAND DE HOEsc*

. We must seek another rational path, now that their assertions have been completely reduced to nothing. And, first and foremost, we must determine how the word *'nihil'* is to be explained. It is a negative term which, like *'nullum'* and *'nemo',* neither presupposes nor opposes any reality: it expresses only a privation, since it refers to no substance, whether visible or invisible, transitory or eternal. *'Nihil' is* an indeclinable word, an apocope of the word 'ni?iifum'. *'Nihil'* — or 'nifiifum'
— is composed of 'Don' and *'hilum'*, which is, without a doubt, a noun. *'Hilum'* was regarded by the Ancients as the equivalent of *'ullum'*. Hence it is clear that *'nullum',* the compound, has a negative meaning. Similarly, 'nihil' is composed of 'non' and *'hilum'*. Now, *'hilum'* refers to a kind of grain found at the tip of a shoot whilst it is still tender, or the pith of a feather. Therefore, since 'nihil' is composed of 'non', an adverb of negation, and *'hilum',* and since John says: 'Without Him nothing *(nihil)* was made', he means by this that even this grain of absolutely no value, or this pith of imper-

('•) I am well aware (see Chapter II) that in the 11th century, and even **occasionally in the** 12th •, *'n'* was used in an adverbial sense, to mean *'no' re*
(ne. nothing). The work *by Jeun* (1180–1190), a Catholic, published by Peter Junderli, translates: 'Gor sens me neen *podez far'*. But by the end of the 12th • century, this usage of 'neeri' became very rare, and the word does not appear with this meaning *in any Cathar* text. This is because, from that point onwards, the Languedoc Cathars had come to understand the Augustinian meaning of *'nihil facio'*: 'I do nothing!' • the translation of *the adverb *ni/lif** (ne. *nothing*) as it was becoming impossible or undesirable for them; nothing
refers now to anything other than **'nothing'** used as a noun, to 'nothingness' treated as a concrete entity.

The conceivable **things that** exist in the pen would not subsist ***if they*** *had not been created by God.* Therefore, since even the most vile things were not made without God, it is certain and beyond doubt that the more important and useful things *were not,* they too, *created without God.* When one says:
'No one is good in and of themselves' (nemo *per se* bonus), or:
'Nothing has been made without a maker' *(nullum* factum *est sine facitore),* these negative terms do not imply the attribution or supposition of a substance, but merely a privation; the same applies when one says: *'Sine Ipsum* nihil *est*': **Without** Him nothing has been made.

If one asks: 'Since nothing that the heretics designate by this word can **apply** to *nińif,* how can it be defined?', we shall reply as follows: 'Sine *i pso [aclum esł nihil*'—in which the word nińif appears—simply means: Nothing was made without Him (or, according to the Greeks, 'apart from' Him). ' The word *nihil* here is equivalent to the negative term *nullum,* that is to say, *non ulla res* (not something), or non *aliquid.* Therefore, no substance, whether small or great, corporeal or incorporeal, has been made without God, and none can, strictly speaking, be nothing (nihil). That which is once something cannot be nothing at all. He to whom it has once been granted to be will never be able to cease to exist (although he may change in appearance and renew his being). Therefore, O Cathar, do not call anything that can be touched 'nihil' (nothing or nothingness).

Some claim, however, that this negative term *'nihil'* can be associated sometimes with the good, sometimes with the evil: they speak the truth. But they do not thereby mean to assert that this 'nothing', *this 'nihil',* is in any way a real being. It merely means that the thing in question is no longer as it had been, or can no longer do what it had initially been able or willing to do. Thus they say: 'Nihil bonum... ': *It is* not *good* to be in sin and with the Devil: this means: It is good *not to be* in sin and with the Devil. *Nihil malum:* it is bad not to be in virtue and with God, means: it is good to be in virtue and with God.

But these differences will become clearer when we shed light on the scriptural texts which the heretics have set against us—

Let us therefore begin at once (•°) to examine their true meaning.

1. *An idol is nothing in the world (1 Cor. 8:*4).

They first set before us this saying of the Apostle:
• *'Nihil est idolum in mundo'* (the idol is nothingness in the world: the Cathar interpretation). Let us reply as follows: it is not the text itself that we reject, but the distorted meaning that the Cathars ascribe to it: *'nihil est idolum'* means: *there is something that the idol* is *not.* Indeed, the stone, wood, bronze, silver or gold of which it is made actually exist: wood, stone and metal are not nothing. Quite the contrary, they are things created by God! But insofar as it is an image, insofar as it has been given, through art and craftsmanship, a certain likeness which causes fools to worship it with latria, believing that, *as an image,* it is itself a deity capable of favouring or harming them, *the idol* ***is*** not. That is to say, there is something it is not: there is *no divinity* in this simulacrum that can be favourable or harmful, as the Gentiles once believed. It is for this reason, and no other, that the Apostle, as shown by the reasoning he gives immediately afterwards, put it this way: 'We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no God but the one God' (1 Cor. 8:4).

2. *If I have not love, I am* nothing *(interpretation by Calharej,* 1 *Cor.* 13:2).

Regarding this second quotation from the Apostle cited by the heretics, we declare: In saying 'If I have no love, I am nothing', the Apostle did not intend to call into question *the reality of the body or the soul,* which, as we have said, cannot be 'annihilated', but *was speaking*

(•°) Cf. *this passage:* immediately. **(Translation** by M· Thouzellier let us hasten to get back on track.)

simply of the highest order (to be continued), that is to say, that of charity, without which adults cannot attain heavenly bliss. He wished to show that without charity, *no virtue* is sufficient to attain salvation. It alone, in fact, contains within itself all good things, for the whole Law and the Prophets depend on charity, that is to say, on the love (in *dilectione)* of God and of one's neighbour. And because faith alone does not save adults — without charity — nor does hope, nor the gift of prophecy, nor knowledge, nor fasting, nor chastity, nor prayer, nor any of the things similar to these, the Apostle was able to say: *Nihil sum:* I am nothing, that is to say: I am not something that leads to eternal salvation. I am nothing: I am of no use whatsoever (to my own salvation). Thus, wherever it occurs, the word *'nihil'* absolutely negates or excludes *any* notion *of bodily* or *spiritual substance,* as here, for example: 'Sine *ipso factum est* nihil (Without him nothing was done)' *or any notion of action,* as when one says, for example: *'Nihil facto* (I do nothing)'

— or *any idea of a circumstance* that may be relevant in the context: *thus* the Apostle does not 'refer' to salvation when he says: *'Nihil* sum: I am nothing' (').

Likewise: to the conclusion drawn by the Manicheans from this proposition, namely that 'if the Apostle, without charity, is nothing, it is evident that all things which lack charity are also nothing', we shall reply that this is neither evident nor true. Indeed, the heavens, the earth, the sea, the birds, the fish, the trees and the animals do not possess charity within them (")—it does not follow that they are nothing. Quite the contrary: they are creatures made by the Almighty.

(•') *Although 'nihil'* is relevant here in terms of salvation, the word does not in **itself** encompass **the idea of salvation.**

(*) For the Catholic, in fact, material things do not possess charity, but God has endowed them with all the perfection compatible with their finitude. For the Cathar, on the contrary, material things are the work of the Evil Principle. Not only do **they** not possess charity, but they are imbued with evil—with which the Devil has put in nothingness itself.

3. *Preteril figura hujns mundi (1* Cor. 7:31). '*For the form of this* world *is passing away.*' •

If these heretics, in their ramblings, say that all these things are nothing 'because the form of this world is passing away' (•°), we shall reply that it must be concluded that they all *failed* the Apostles when Christ sent them out to preach the Gospel. For He said to them: 'When I sent you out without a purse, or bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?' *(Numquid aliquid defuit vobis?* Luke 22:35–36). They replied: 'Nihil—nothing!' (*). If everything that can be seen in this world is nothing *(nihil),* one must conclude that the heavens, the earth, the sea and everything in them were lacking to the apostles when the Lord sent them out to preach. One makes a fool of oneself merely by uttering such nonsense!

4. .. *'They are regarded as almost nothing and as empty' (Isaiah* 40:17).
'All nations are as nothing before him – they are nothing and emptiness to him {••). •

Likewise, to this quotation from Isaiah we shall reply: It is sound and correctly worded, but Isaiah does not say that all nations are nothing; he says that they are before God 'as if they did not exist' *(quasi* non *sint),* that they are in his eyes *as* nothing and that they are regarded as vain. Indeed, compared with the power of God, all the power of the nations is 'nothing' (niùif, that is to say, it is not 'something'). Therefore, in God's sight, all nations are *as though* they did not exist; 'they are to him as a speck of dust on the scales' *(Isaiah* 15:40), because, compared to God's strength and wisdom, the strength, the power

(") This argument is very different from the others: it is strictly 'philosophical' in nature and does not revolve around a mere verbal debate. But Durand of Huesca refuses to examine the nature of *French* being (which *ranges from the finite to* the infinite) and hastens to return to his ridiculous arguments **by reductio ad absurdum.**

(") According to the interpretation given by the Cathars, or rather the one that Durand de Huesca *mistakenly* imagines **they** are giving **him**.

(•*) Translation from the *Jerusalem Bible.*

The wisdom, beauty and wisdom of the nations *are nothing.* And that is why Isaiah declares: 'In his eyes they are as nothing and deemed vain.' Precisely, he does not say: they are nothing, but *as* nothing.

5. *Ad* niftiftim *deduces omnes yenles (Ps.* 58:9). *'You will lead all the nations to nothingness.'*

Likewise, to their objection drawn from the Psalm: *'Ad nihilt!m deduces omnes genles'* (You will lead all nations into nothingness (°•) — *Ps.* 58:9), we reply: If everything that lacks charity is nothing (nifiif) (•') or idolatry or sin, as *the heretics have interpreted it,* then it must be understood that God will lead all nations to sin, or to idolatry, or to that which is without charity: which is ridiculous. What, then, did the prophet mean? † This: 'You will lead all nations to nothingness *(nihilum)*: to nothingness, that is to say, *against* nothingness, that is to say, against idolatry, for idolatry is nothing (nihil), since the divinity believed to be in the idol has absolutely no existence. And that is why the Apostle said:

'the idol is nothing at all' (nihil). God, therefore, in a sense leads all nations to nothingness *(nihilum),* that is to say, *towards* nothingness when, through the preaching of his disciples—which rends all nations from idolatry—he has led them to know him and to worship him, so that they may no longer worship idols, but the one God, their Creator.

One can understand this in another way (••): God has led and continues to lead all nations towards 'nothingness', that is to say, towards a 'not-something' *(ad non aliquid), not*

(•) *Nihilum* and non *riihil,* as M'ie Thouzellier puts it in the cited article, who, even more often than Durand de Huesca, confuses *nihil* and *nihi mm.*

(") Durand of Huesca returns to his perennial argument by reductio ad absurdum. Let us recall, once again, that this nothingness (ni/iif and niñi/um) is, for the Cathars, *something.* God leads the nations to relative annihilation, to the 'less-being'.

(••) Not 'in other words', as translated by M. Thouzellier; but according to a different *manner.* Having explained **niùifum** as... idolatry, Durand de Huesca now agrees to see **nihil nm** as a 'nothingness' : the annihilation of Glory, Wealth, Power, etc.

not because *they cease to be anything,* but because, upon dying a physical death, they are no longer in control of themselves and can therefore *no longer* sin or live in defiance of (the law of) God. It is in this way that God leads all nations to nothingness *(nihilum)* through His Judgement. Indeed, 'men will find nothing of their riches in their hands' (lili(f inrenicnï *Of22f2€S HlTi divitiarum* in *mani bus* suis — *Ps.* 75:6). Thus all the proud and the mighty in wickedness, humbled by their punishments, will lose both power and pleasure (°°). They are heading towards nothingness *(nihil)* (°°), are capable of nothing; they can no longer persecute the Righteous because, from now on, all power (to act) has been taken from them. It is in the same sense that the prophet said elsewhere: *'Ad nihilum dcduces tri bulanles* nor' (You will lead those who oppress us to nothingness — *Ps.* 59:14), and in another passage: *'Ad nihilum deduclus est in conspeclu ejus mali gnus, limenfes aulem Dominum gloriificaf':* The wicked one was reduced to nothing in the sight of the righteous one who glorifies those who fear the Lord *(Ps.* 14:4). The righteous, indeed, once they have been tested and purified by persecution, will be glorified. That is why the blessed James declares: 'Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when his worth is recognised, he will receive the crown of life' *(James* 1:12). But the devil and all the wicked, having lost the power to persecute, will be cast into nothingness
{ad ni/iifum), that is to say, to a state *in which they will no longer be able to exist*
*by their own power {**).*

Lx TRUE CATHAR THOUGHT

Having examined the meaning of the word *'nihil'* and shown, — albeit very imperfectly,— that it could only mean: its...

(••) The power to live in sensual pleasure.

(••) *Ad nihil* ïendunf. Saint Augustine said, speaking of the Devil, *but in* a *very different sense: 'Telendit ad nihilum'.*

(•') It should be noted that in Catharism, too, the Devil loses the power to persecute the Good at the end of time, when souls are freed from their material bodies.

something, nothing... Durand of Huesca addresses a number of points on which it is less easy for him to reduce the Cathar interpretation to absurd wordplay.

Let us not waste our time commenting on his argument, which, incidentally, is quite clear, but let us rather examine what this Cathar thought was that he so thoroughly misunderstood:

1. *The idol is a (relative) nothingness in the* world.

It is evident that for the Dualists the idol was 'something' insofar as it symbolised—admittedly not a divinity—but *the essence of the subject* rendered *relatively* non-existent. On this point, the Cathar must have thought along much the same lines as the Augustinian apocryphal text which declares, addressing the Word: 'If I was nothing when I was without you, it is because I was like nothing *(quasi nihil)* or like an idol which is nothing *(quod nihil est)...'* ' The idol expresses the state of a being half-annihilated by corruption and sin. For the Cathar, as for Saint Augustine, *it relates to the plane of being* and *not to that of value,* power, or *activity.*

2. *fiii if I have no charity, I am nothing (relat•'n-*

Durand de Huesca states quite clearly: 'Nihil *has nothing to do* here *with the* body *and the soul.* The Apostle simply wished to show that, without charity, no virtue is sufficient to secure salvation. *Nihil* therefore means: 'I am not something that is "worth anything"' with a view to eternal salvation. ' The explanation that Durand substitutes for the Cathar's — implicit — one proves that, for the latter, *it is* indeed *the essence of the body and that of the soul which were at issue.* He certainly believed that without charity—*the* very *balance of God*—one was cast back into the evil creation, which possesses no true being, and that for Saint Paul—as he understood *him—'nihil'* was indeed a 'real' *nothingness (relali[) of being* affecting substances, and not merely a 'value-less' nothingness ' (••).

(*) Saint **Augustine sometimes interpreted** St Paul as did Durand of Huesca: *'Detrahe char ilalem, ri ihil pros um caelera':* without

Durand of Huesca's other argument — however ridiculous it may be — proves this even more clearly if one ascribes to it even a modicum of philosophical substance. 'If the heavens, the earth, the sea,' he says, 'the whole visible world were nihil, as the Cathars assert, because they lack charity, then they would not exist... Yet they do exist.' From the very terms of the refutation, we can see that this was the opinion being refuted. The earth, the sea, the entire visible world, devoid of soul and spirit, clearly do not belong to the realm of charity. It was therefore for an entirely different reason that the Cathars believed that the material universe *possessed* only *the appearance of being* and that it was not grounded *in incorruptible being. The satanic universe is vain* and *transitory in substance.*

3. *The world's* purity passes away...

It is surprising that Durand de Huesca did not dwell longer on this quotation from Saint Paul. He refuses to consider that the existence of *the 'transiloria'*—those realities that proceed *from* nothing and are destined *for nothingness*—is of ontological concern, and that the nature of that which passes and must one day come to an end is, it would seem, less grounded in being than eternal and incorruptible substances. They are *nothing.* Bossuet said it himself: 'Let us regard as pure nothingness that which must come to an end.' Perhaps Durand de Huesca saw in this an insoluble difficulty... and he hastens to return to his absurd argument by reductio ad absurdum.

For the Cathar, it is evident that it is the fransiforia—born of nothingness and destined for nothingness—that cause this world to pass away. The entire material world is *nothing.*

4. *All nations* stand *before him as if they did not exist...*

Durand of Huesca explains: 'The power of nations is *nothing* compared to that of God. The strength of all

charity; all the rest is of no benefit *[Sermo,* de Verbis Evangelii, John 10]. Nevertheless, he believed that a lack of **charity led to an ontological failure.**

nations, their power, their wisdom are nullified before that of God... etc. Judging by this refutation, it is clear that the Cathars, on the contrary, believed that *nations* were (relatively) superior on the *ontological plane* and not merely in their virtues or faculties *compared to those of God.* (They might *also* have considered—and certainly did consider—that the virtues of nations were infinitely inferior to those of the Good God, and even that the being of the evil ones, whilst not *nihil* by essence, would certainly be so *in relation* to the supreme Being (•).)

5. *Towards the* new *light, lead all nations.*

This means, according to Durand de Huesca, that all power and all pleasure will be taken away from the wicked after death, the Judgement and punishment. The devil and the evil spirits, having lost their power to persecute the righteous, will be led *ad nihilum,* that is to say, to the annihilation *not of their being,* but of their own power. Thus, always and everywhere in Durand of Huesca's thought, we see the diminution of power, efficacy or value taking the place of ontological deficiency. This is sufficient reason to conclude—since the Cathars held the opposite view—that for them it was indeed a matter of ontological deficiency. The pseudo-Saint Augustine certainly recalls the words of the psalmist when he says: *'Ad nihilum duxerunl me* (iniquitates meae), *quia tu es ver hum ef ego non exam lecum sine quo faclum est nihil' (Sol.* apoc. V). Here, as elsewhere, he seeks to express his own (relative) reduction to nothingness through (freely committed) sin. The Cathars, for their part, believed that the entire malignant manifestation had been reduced to nothing in this way, but originally and necessarily through the sole satanic sin and the ***eternal corruption of*** *the Evil Principle.*

(^) Durand de Huesca employs another argument which we shall set aside: *'Ad* niñifum' would mean *'contra nihilum',* and 'niùifum' would be... idolatry (the idol being *'nihil'):* God led his people away from idolatry by compelling them to renounce idols and to worship only him... Under no *circumstances will Durand de* Huesca *admit that 'nihilum siqui fie', as the Cathars maintained,* refers to *the non-existence of being,* a relative *nullification* /

N REPRINT OF 'xnc ANTI-CATHAR EXPOSITION
BY DURAND DE Huesco

6. *Nihil [aclus es: You have become a* nét7n/ (That *is the end of the law for ever!) — Ezekiel* 28:19.

Similarly, with regard to this quotation from Ezekiel concerning the Prince of Tyre, to whom it is said, *'Nihil [aclus es',* we may reply: The prophet Ezekiel thus attests that the Prince of Tyre, by raising his heart too high in pride, *lost* his wisdom, whereas he had at first walked perfectly in his ways *(perfeclus* in *viis* – 28:15) from the day of his birth until the day when iniquity was found in him *(donec* ineenfa est *iniquitas* in *eo* – 28:15) — has achieved nothing within himself *(n ihil [aclum es] in* eo) *of what he wished and had thought to achieve.* It is as though God had said to him: 'You have not become what you wanted to be!' For, having lost his wisdom and his wealth, he has become, without glory, the leader and instigator of pride. And since the word 'Tyr' is interpreted as signifying anguish and tribulation, it denotes, in the mystical sense, all those who, in any way, torment the saints— whether through wicked words or by the example they set, or by persecuting them maliciously: it is their king of wickedness who is called the Devil!

It is said that he became nothing (nihil), *not in terms of substance or essence,* but simply because he wished to equal his Creator and could not. He did not become 'something' (real) even in terms of the very pride he claimed to embody... But we shall discuss this at greater length, with God's help, at a later date and in due course...

1. Ecce vos colis e.r nihilo (Isaiah 41:24). *'Behold, you were created from nothing.'*

The heretics again object to us with this phrase from Isaiah—'Behold, you are nothing (ez nifiifo). ' We reply to them: 'If the idol, or anything lacking in charity, is "nothing" (ez nihilo), then those to whom Isaiah is speaking must have come from the idol or from something lacking in charity ("'): which is ridiculous.' Let us therefore explain how we are to understand 'You are from nothing (ez *nihilo)*': Quite simply in the sense that we say God created everything out of nothing (ez *nihilo)* — (II Maccabees 7:28) (••). Hence what is stated in the *Book of Wisdom:* 'You, Lord, created all things from invisible matter' (Wis., II, 18) (°'), but your work, it says, comes from that which is not (ex *eo quod non est),* because the works accomplished by the wicked 'are not', *that is to say, do not endure for ever,* even though their guilt and their punishment last for ever...

Likewise, we may further argue against the heretics:
'If everything that is without charity is nothing (nihil), God will save men because of that very thing which is without charity, since the prophet says: *"Pro nihilo salvos facies* eos" *(Ps.* 55:8). "It is for nothing that you will save them!"'

Again, if the idol, sin, the Devil and all that is without charity is 'nothing', as the heretics claim in their ramblings, then the idol, sin, the Devil and all that is without charity *are better and* sweeter *things* than the fear of God and His commandments! For Wisdom declares: *'For I know that there is nothing better than the fear of God, and* ***nothing sweeter*** *than the respect of*

(') • Yet you are nothing and your work is nothing • (Jerusalem Bible).

(") Again, the argument from the absurd 1

(••) This is more tenable: they are in nihilo because God created everything ex *nihilo.*

(") *Formless,* invisible? **The author** does not teach the eternity **of matter but is no doubt thinking of the organisation of** the world from a chaotic mass (Geri., 1). This recourse to an authority that speaks of pre-existing matter is surprising in Durand de Huesca. It is true that he moves on to the following argument — unrelated to the first: the work of sinners is transient in the sense that it does not endure as such, although sinners are not **thereby condemned.**

carl in mandatés Domini il gl0rio mogno tel s«qui Dsum. 'May those who have survived may know that 'nothingness' is better than the fear of God, and that nothingness (niùif) is sweeter *than* observance of the Lord's commandments (°); and to follow God is a great glory!'") All things which one could not possibly approve of unless one were mad 1

Likewise, and in the same book: 'Son, practise "nothingness" (nihil) without deliberation; and after the deed, you will not repent1' *{Fili, sine consilio nihil [acias el post faclum non penilebis.* etc. — Wis., 32:19) (° J. If *'nothing'* is everything that is without charity, we are therefore exhorted by *Wisdom* to do thoughtlessly that which is without charity—*that is to say, idolatry or sin*—so that, subsequently, we need not repent of it! All these things must be regarded as manifestly false.

8. (Nothing *is done without God.)*

But someone might object: If the removal of the power to sin, as it will take place at the Judgement, is nothing (neither 'nothing' nor 'nothingness') in itself, then it will therefore take place without God, since without Him nothing has been done, or: nothingness has been created ('°'). To this we must reply: The Judgement will not take place *without God*, 'since the Father has entrusted all judgement (' ') to the Son, who will render to each according to their deeds. And He Himself will, in all righteousness, mete out punishment to the ungodly; and instead of the eternal blessings they would have deserved had they not sinned, He will give them the eternal fire and death of Gehenna, since they have previously died in sin. *But that death God has not*

(*) According to the interpretation that Durand de Huesca believes to be that of the Cathars. In reality, the Cathars, like the Catholics, understood it to mean ' ' ('May those who have survived know that nothing is better', etc.).

Still resorting to reductio *ad absurdum.*

(") Do *nothing* without reflection; you will not repent of your deeds 1 (•°)

On this point, the interpretation of 'nihil' as *'nothing'* or as 'not' 'nothing' converge; this is why Durand de Huesea anticipates the objection: is there not something which, as pure negativity, exists apart from God: the annulment of the ability to sin?

(") For the Father judges no one. He has entrusted all judgement to the Son *(John* 5:22). Is death not, as the Cathars used to say, one of those 'things' that were made without God (and by the Devil)? No, for Durand of Huesca it has no reality whatsoever; it is pure nothingness. That which does not exist has no need of a Creator.

fail. Wisdom says on this subject: 'God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the loss of the living' *(Wisdom,* I, 13–14).
'He created all things so that they might endure, and he has made all the nations of the Earth capable of healing (•°)' *(Wis.,* I, 14). What God has *created* are *all* visible and invisible creatures 'which are in the heavens and on the earth' (Cod., I, 16). And this is what John says: All *things* were made through Him (*omnia per Ipsum facta sunt),* that is to say, every animate and inanimate creature; and without Him nothing was made (ex sine *ipso (nulla est)* — *John* 1: 3. For if 'nihil' were indeed *some kind of* substance or the essence of something existing without charity, as the Cathars maintained — the Saviour's disciples *would have taken it with them on their journey,* in accordance with the instructions of the One who, when sending them out to preach, had said to them, amongst other things: 'Take *nothing* with *you* on your journey, except a staff: *Nihil lulerilis* in min nisi *riryam* fanftim... etc.' *(Mark* 6:8) (••). Not only is their way of interpreting the texts, on this point, contemptible, but it also provokes laughter.

Let us therefore put an end to their prevarications! Let us hold it as certain that *'nifiif'* means: *not... something (ne...* nothing) and let us worship, without ever wavering, the true God of nature who created and fashioned all minds, all souls and all bodies, all creatures, both visible and invisible.

A TRUE PE h'S EE CATHA RE. CONCLUSION

... *'You have become fatl nih il'* (Ezekiel 28:19). Here Durand of Huesca could not be more precise: he says, literally and philosophically, *that 'celo' does not concern essence and substance,*

(") The creatures of the world are beneficial; in them **there is no** poison of death, and Hades does not reign on Earth, for Justice is immortal • *{Wisdom,* 1:14–15).

(") Whilst the tone towards the end **of the Treatise had become** somewhat more forceful, it is disappointing to see its author revert to such a ridiculous line of reasoning. The Cathars understood *Mark, b,* 8 exactly as the Catholics did: *'Ne guna cansa* no *porlarelz* en trio...' (Le *Nonne au* Testament *proven bal de L yon,* published by Clédat, p. 120): 'And **he instructed them** to take nothing for the journey but a staff alone... • In Luke 9:3: • **Take** nothing **for the journey, not even a staff...**

This simply means that the Prince of Tyre sought to equate himself with the Creator and failed. He was 'annihilated' only in his ambitions, in his power, in his worth. Thus, Durand of Huesca adheres to the idea that what is 'nihil' *is* that *which is worthless,* or has lost its value. What he clearly reproaches the Cathars for is believing that this world is *'nihil'* because it has less *'being'* than the incorruptible world *in terms of essence and substance;* in other words, for regarding it as an entity endowed with less 'being' than the celestial entities *(otherwise, his refutation* would make *no* sense).

If we emphasise what will seem obvious to many, it is because some heresiologists persist as if they feared conferring a certain — philosophical stature upon Catharism by denying that, in Languedoc, it was based on an unequal dualism of being and nothingness. Mlle Thouzellier writes: 'For the Cathars, the word *"nihil"* encompasses a set of realities devoid of value, and not *"substantivised* nothingness".' *I* am not quite sure what she means by "substantivised nothingness" — it is the word "nihil" that is substantivised, and the 'thing' it designates is an *existent* permeated by nothingness — but it seems to me that, through a peculiar act of mimicry, M*e Thou-zellier attributes to the Cathars the very theory that cannot be theirs, since it is precisely the one that Durand de Huesca adopts to refute their interpretation of ni/iif. It is Durand de Huesca himself who demonstrates that his erudite editor is mistaken as to the meaning to be given to this word. How, moreover, could she have failed to see that, if the Cathars had regarded the 'nothingness' of the evil creation as merely a 'nothingness of value', they would not have been so utterly reprehensible? For, after all, all good Christians have believed, like Durand of Huesca, that this world—subject in any case to the Prince of Darkness—*was worth less* than *the Kingdom of God,* and indeed that it was worth nothing at all. Everyone knows that we must detach ourselves from it, since Christ is not of this world and the world is not of him...

If the Cathars had attributed *the same* ontological *reality* to the evil creation as to the good one — even whilst judging it morally inferior to the other — how can we explain that they otherwise described it as *vain,* corruptible and *transitory,* contrasting it with an eternal and incorruptible nature?

If, as all heresiologists maintain, *'nihil'* is necessarily *disparaging* and *pejorative,* and if, consequently, heaven, earth and the sea are, ipso facto, devalued, in what respect can they be so, if not in the ontological respect, since, having no soul and therefore *no charity,* they are free from any moral deficiency? Does Durand of Huesca, by asserting on his own behalf that *'nihil'* does not pertain to *essence or substance,* not clearly establish that, for the Cathars, it was indeed, on the contrary, a (relative) annihilation *of the very substance of the spirits?* And even in his *reductio ad absurdum* arguments, does he not reveal to us that, for the Cathars, the visible heavens, earth and sea were a *'nihil',* that is to say, a vain appearance against a backdrop of corruption †

Durand de Huesca is aware only of the full reality of the beings created by God and of absolute nothingness (which is nothing at all). He has no concept of that intermediate world between being and nothingness which is precisely constituted by nature reduced to nothingness. He could only deny it, since this ontological deficiency (original and essential) *is obviously conceivable only within a dualist system,* and on the assumption that, alongside the creation wrought by the Supreme Being, there exists another creation: a malevolent nature brought about by the evil principle. The Cathars believed that this nature possessed enough being to reveal its satanic creator to *the* material *senses*, but not enough to raise itself to the level of the essences created by the God of Good. It is in this respect that they could say that it was the *'nihil'* that was made without God (E/ *sine* ipso *factum est* nihil). This 'nothing' is relative nothingness because it is not founded on incorruptible being.

LIBER SOL ILOQU IORUM AN IMAE AD DEUM (SOL ILOQUES APOCRYPHA)

CHAPTER V

QUID SST NIHIL FIERIŸ
What does it mean to become nothing?)

... I shall therefore confess to you, O my Father, Lord of heaven and earth; I shall confess my wretchedness to you, that I may be granted a share in your mercy. Yes, I have fallen into misfortune and have been cast back into nothingness *(ad nihilum redaclus sum)*, and I did not even realise it, because you are the Truth and I was not with you. My iniquities have inflicted wounds upon me, yet I felt no pain from them, for you are Life and I was not with you. They led me to nothingness *(ad nihilum duxerunt me)* because you are the Word and I was not with you, through whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made / 'without whom nothingness was made'. And that is why, without you, I have become nothing (') (ef *ideo sine te faclus sum* nihil) because that which leads to nothingness is nothing other than nothingness itself *(quia* nihil *est quod ad nihilum ducit)*.

All things that have been made were made by the Word, who gave them not only existence but also the qualities that distinguish them. God looked upon his works, and they were all very good. Thus all things that have been made were made by the Word, and all things that have been made by the Word are excellent. Why, then, are

(') It is clear here how the act of deriving 'nothing' *whilst one does not cease to exist* leads to the idea of *relative* 'nothing'. To say that the sinner becomes a *'nihil'* by doing evil is to posit him as an existing being in *the process of becoming* nothing: he tends towards nothingness, but does not actually cease to exist.

they are excellent: for they are the works of the Word, without whom nothing was made (ef *sine ipso factum est nihil),* since nothing good could exist without him who is the supreme good. Evil exists wherever there is an absence of good, and evil is nothing, since it is nothing other than the privation of good (privatio), just as blindness is nothing other than the privation of light.

Thus, evil is nothing (ni/tif *est),* since it was not made by the Word, without whom nothing was made—'nothing was made'. Evil is that which is deprived of that supreme good through which all that exists was made. Things that do not exist were not made **by him,** and that is why they are nothing (ef *ideo nihil sunt). Things that have not been made are evil,* because all those that have been made were made by the Word, and all things made by the Word are good. Since, therefore, all things have been made by the Word, *that which is evil does not come from him.* It follows that all things that have been made are good (°). That which is evil is real because it has not been *made,* and it is nothing but **nothingness** because nothing has been made without the Word (for without the Word, nothingness was made). Evil is therefore not a being, since it has not been made (°). But how can it be evil if it has not been made? It is because evil is the privation of the supreme good through which all that is good was made. It is therefore an evil to be without the Word: it is not to exist, for nothing can exist except through him. But what, then, does it mean to be separated from the Word?

If you wish to know, learn first what the Word is. The Word of God tells us: *'I* am the Way, the Truth and the Life.' Thus, to be separated from the Word is to be removed from

(•) The apocryphal text is certainly not dualistic. It remains faithful to the true doctrine of Saint Augustine that evil *does not* exist, that it is merely the privation or *absence* of the Good. But if evil does not come from God, where does it come from? And does evil not possess some reality, particularly in the creature that commits *it*? It is clear to see how the Cathars could have moved from the Augustinian idea — *of 'substantia mala'* (the substance of the sinner partly *annihilated* by sin) — to the idea of a substance that is originally and eternally devoid of charity, severed from the Word and, consequently, very ***close to*** nothingness.

(') For the Cathars, too, Evil is a privation of Good: it does not exist; yet it exists in an eternal source, independent of the true God, who possesses only the 'être néant' (the opposite of divine being).

the Way, the Truth and the Life: *it* is *nothing but nothingness (sine ipso nihil);* it is to be evil by the very fact that one is separated from the Word who made all things and made them excellent. To be separated from the Word through whom all things were made is nothing other than to be *deficient* (ontically: *from 'facere')* (^). It is to pass from the state of positive existence to that of negative existence (ef *a facto transire in de[eclum)* (°). For without Him there is nothing (quia *sine i pso est nihil).* Whenever you stray from the good, you separate yourself from the Word, who is the good par excellence, and by that very fact you become nothing *{nihil)* (•), because you are without the Word, without whom nothing was made
nothingness.

You have therefore enlightened me, Lord, so that I might see You. *I* have seen You and I have come to know myself. I have seen that I have fallen *into* nothingness *('folies nihil faclus sum'), as many times* as *I have separated myself from You.* I have seen that, having forgotten the good, which is none other than You, I have become evil. Ah, how wretched I was not to realise then that by abandoning you I was becoming nothing ('quia *te desertens nihil* sum'). But why should I concern myself with resolving this question? If I were nothing, how could I have failed to wish to know? (7). We know that what is evil is nothing, and that what is nothing has no existence. We know that what is not Good is not a being, because it is nothing but nothingness (floo *esI* quia niùif est) ( ). If, therefore, I was nothing when I was separated from you, it is because I was in reality a quasi-nothing (*quasi nihil*) and similar to the idol, which is nothing *(qtlod nihil esI).* It has ears without being able to hear, nostrils without being able to

(•) Translation by Abbé Mamert (1838): 'This is nothing other than *returning to* nothingness.'

(s) Evil may well be nothing at all, yet it is something in the transition. It is, in the sinner's being, that towards which he tends: nothingness (cf. the Cathar terms).

(®) El ideo nihil efficeris: 'nihil' is used here as a noun: you become nothingness (translation by Abbé Mamert: 'we become nothing again'). It seems that in John 1:3, quoted immediately afterwards, 'nihil' is also taken as a noun.

(') It is evident that for Saint Augustine, for the apocrypha, and for the Cathars, this nothingness is a reality, a quasi-nothingness.

(•) Readers less attuned to subtleties will clearly see here that: 'non est quia *"rtiñif"'* does not quite mean the same thing as: *'non est quia* non *est'.*

to breathe in scents, eyes that cannot see, a mouth that cannot speak, hands that cannot touch, feet that cannot walk: in a word, it possesses all the elements of the human body, minus the sensitivity that animates it.

CHAPTER VI

Thus, my **God,** whilst I was without you *(sine* ie), I did not exist, but I was nothing *{non [ni, sed nihil*
/ui) (®). I was blind, deaf and insensitive, for I did not discern good, I did not avoid evil, I did not feel the pain of my wounds, I did not see the darkness in which I was shrouded. For I was without You, O true Light who enlightens every man coming into this world. Woe is me! I received wounds and yet I did not suffer. I was led astray and did not realise it, because I was nothing, because I was without Life—that is to say, without the Word through whom all things were made. O Lord, who art my light, if my enemies were able to treat me as their fury dictated, if they struck me, stripped me bare, covered me with filth, corruption and wounds, if they finally killed me, it is because, having strayed from thee, I had once again become, without thee,
nothing (i°) (quia *recessi a Te, et feci sum* nihil sine Te)...

(•) Here again: 'non *Qui sed nihil fui*' does not mean 'non *Qui sed* non *fui'*. The scant reality conceded to 'nihil' used as a noun corresponds to what remains of being in an *existent* when it no longer participates in the life of the Word *(Verbum per quod omnia* conservatur, *sine quo omnia* perit: the Word through whom all things are preserved, and without ***whom*** **they are** • annihilated' — *isol. apoc.,* 6).

(") A relative nothingness, a quasi-nothingness.

III

THE BOOK OF THE TWO PRINCIPLES

(Troilé du Li bre ar brire: Probalio quod non *sit fiherum arbilrium)*

Dondaine's edition of *Li *fer de duobus princi pris**, pp. 92–93.
Thouzellier edition, pp. 204–210)

... PROOF THAT THERE IS NO FREE WILL

If one examines the arguments set out above with care, one will see that the theory of free will — that force or free power which our opponents claim has been bestowed by

God to the angels to enable them to do good or evil as they please

ou — holds no weight against my thesis. Indeed, it is regarded as impossible in the eyes of the wise that any being could possess within itself the power to perform two contradictory acts simultaneously, at a single moment and at one and the same time; that is to say, to possess the power to do *good at the same time as evil* (1), and especially before God, who knows absolutely all future events and according to whose wisdom of whom all things are necessarily brought into being from all eternity.

Key argument: it would be astonishing if the good angels

(1) This argument is Aristotle's. It was used time and again by medieval thinkers, and no doubt the author of **The Book of the Two Principles** may have become acquainted with it indirectly through the philosopher's commentators. As quotations from ancient authors are fairly rare in Cathar texts, it is worth noting that it appears, as *it stands,* in the **Metaphysics**: 'This is why a power **cannot**, whether one wishes it or not, produce two effects or **contrary effects** at the same time, for **this is** not how power acts upon contraries, and *there* is *no power capable of* ***producing*** them simultaneously...' *(Metaphysics,* Theta 5 (The Actualisation of Power), edited by J. Tricot, vol. II, Paris, 1950, p. 36).

3e Argument had the power to hate the goodness that was *like* themselves and which had existed from all eternity, as well as its cause (°), and that they began to love Evil, which did not yet exist (•) and which is the very opposite of Good (^). And this *without any cause,* since, according to the ignorant, there was absolutely no cause for Evil. (The view of our opponents is **all the more** untenable **given that it** is written **in *the Book of Jesus,*** *son of Sirach:* **'Every** animal loves its own kind, **and so every** man loves his neighbour. Every flesh unites with that which is like it, and every man unites with his own kind' *{Sir.,* 13:19–20). And again: 'Birds join with their own kind, and truth returns to those who practise its works' *(Sir.,* 27:10). Thus, according to these testimonies, it seems evident that the good angels *ought to have chosen the Good* which resembled them and which had existed from all eternity, rather than rejecting it in favour of Evil, which at that time had *no existence whatsoever* — and whose very cause did not exist — according to what our opponents believe — although it is difficult to accept, as they do, that anything can come into being without a cause. Is it not written 'It is impossible for anything to come into being without that change having a cause?' And also: 'Everything that passes from potentiality to actuality requires a cause that brings it to actuality (').

Argument

One might further say (a new argument): According to our opponents' hypothesis, that which possesses existence — and the cause of that existence — that is to say, the Good — would *have had less influence* (on the angels) than that which did not possess existence, namely evil — and its cause — which did not exist either — and this contrary to what is written: • '**a** thing must first exist in order to be able to act' (•).

5• Argument

(•) The Supreme Good, God.

(•) For monists.

(•) And of which, consequently, the angels could not have **an idea of.**

(•) Cf. Al-Kindi, **Liber de* intellectu*: *nihil autem quod est rei in potentia exit ad effectum per se ipsum* (Dondaine, *op.* cit., p. 93, note, lines **3–11).**

(•) The text chosen by Mlle Thouzellier is as follows: *'And* let there be: *that which was, according to them, namely the good, is more real than that which was* not, *that is, the evil, even though the latter is more abundant.* 'Oporfel *ofiquid* pritts *esse quam agal.'* — It does not strike us as the best version. It must be corrected by restoring *'cgil',* which has been crossed out in the manuscript, and by assuming that

kt furthermore this: that one must bear in ~~mind~~ as a matter of

that if a ~~cause~~ remains absolutely in the state in which it was at the outset, it cannot, of its own accord, produce anything more than what it has already produced. An action that begins only comes into being if something new has arisen, for as it is written: 'If any being becomes an agent which was not one originally, it is necessary that this be brought about by some new modification taking place within it. ' That is why one must admit that if the agent's dispositions remain always identical to what they were, and if the agent undergoes no change arising from itself or from the outside, there is no reason why it should adopt a new mode of action rather than leave it in non-existence. It is this non-existence, on the contrary, that would continue indefinitely (7). For, just as something.

the scribe also mistakenly crossed out *'el'* after *'illos'*, and, after 'eraï', the three words *'sec* ejus cnusa'. We therefore read: *'And el ram: that which was, according to them — for the sake of el ejus, namely the Good, acted* less *than that which was not — nor for the sake of e jus — that is, the evil — although the scribe wrote: "Something must* first *exist before it acts."'*

This is the only text that is acceptable in terms of accuracy, clarity of style and logic. The Cathar author refers here to the monist view to show that it contradicts the well-known and obvious philosophical principle: *for something to act, it must first exist.* The perfect *tense 'egit'* therefore has a conditional meaning here: *'would have acted'* (if the Catholic hypothesis were true...). However, the indicative mood would, at a pinch, be admissible (which was *more likely* to have 'then acted' — on the occasion of the fall of the angels (as reported by the monists) — less effectively than that which *was* less *likely to have been...).* In both cases, the monist hypothesis is untenable for the Cathar author.

MI'e Thouzellier's translation is virtually incomprehensible due to the obscurity of the text she has used: 'And even that which, according to them, existed—that is to say, the good—has less need (of cause † or effect?) than that which did not exist—that is to say, the evil—*even though it is written*: a thing must exist before it can act. ' The verb **e get** has no object here. And it is surprising that it is in the present tense when the verb **esse** appears twice in *the imperfect (id quod eral... id quod* non *erat...).* It is clear that **eqit** and **agat** correspond to one another (in the corrected text). — See on this subject: R. Nelli, **On Some Obscure* Points *of* the *Afrre *des deux princes*,* Folklore Editions, 1973.

(') Literally: Would the agent not *rather* (preferably) have the action of being (that is to say, action *in* the realm of being) than the action of non-being (that is to say, action aimed at non-being)? And this action (in one sense
or the other) would continue indefinitely not to take place. The translation by Mr Thouzellier: *'The agent would have no more action of being than of non-being, but it* would continue *indefinitely not to be'* is

just as the other comes about through otherness *(diversity),* so it is through identity that the identical endures.

7° Argument-ment Even if it were true (as the monists believe) (') that without free will none of the angels **could have** sinned, it is clear that God would not have granted them this free will, since He knew that His kingdom was to be corrupted solely by its own effects ( ), and that if He had granted it to them, the corruption of His angels would necessarily have to be attributed to this God 'who is above all praise'. This cannot be done without impiety. We must therefore conclude from all this that there exists another principle, that of Evil, which is the origin and cause of the corruption of the angels and of all evil.

For the sake of clarity, here are the arguments against free will set out in the chapter we have just translated. There are seven of them. (The following chapter elaborates on others which have been examined above.)

1. — Definition of free will: it is the free power granted to a being to do, indifferently or at its own choice, either good or evil. Aristotelian objection: it is impossible for one to have the power to perform two contrary actions simultaneously, at a single moment and at the same time.

2. — A reminder of the argument against free will based on the impossibility *of reconciling God's foreknowledge with the freedom of creatures* (in a system such as that of J. de Lugio, where the essence of beings derives, in all its aspects and necessarily, from their Creator).

3. — One can only love one's own kind. In the monist hypothesis, the angels should have chosen the Good that resembled them, and hated the Evil that did not resemble them.

4. — All the more so since, according to the monists, Evil did not exist and had no (primary) cause.

incorrect. It is the agent's action that would continue indefinitely not to be, and not the agent itself, *since it does exist.* The meaning is undoubtedly: 'But he (the agent) would still not be (any different from what he was). • (•) The author adopts the viewpoint of his opponents. He does not present as a fact that angels could not have sinned in any way other than through free will, but rather as a monistic view. He himself believed that angels had been corrupt from all eternity. (•) That is to say: that in these circumstances alone (by virtue of this free will).

4 *bis.* — Evil did not exist (according to Catholics). Yet it is impossible for a thing *to come into being* without a cause. Everything that passes from potentiality to actuality requires a cause that brings it about.

5, — In the monist hypothesis, the Good that 'existed' would have less *influence* on the angels than Evil, which did not exist. This is untenable, for in order to act, a thing must exist. (The previous argument concerned the cause; this one concerns *the effect,* the action.)

6. — It is not only new creations that require a cause, but also the modifications and changes that occur within an existing entity. If a created agent that was good becomes evil, a new cause must necessarily have acted upon it to make it evil.

7. — Assuming, as Catholics believe, that it was not possible for angels to sin other than through free will (°):

a) either God would not have granted them this free will, given His foreknowledge that they would become evil and corrupt His kingdom;

(b) or God would have granted it to them, knowing what the harmful consequences of this gift would be; and in that case, He Himself would be the true creator of Evil. This **is something no** wise person would dare to maintain.

For all these reasons (the impossibility of a creature having the potential for both good and evil; the impossibility, for the human mind, of reconciling God's foreknowledge with the freedom of creatures; the impossibility of anything being created or altered without a cause; the impossibility of that which does not exist being able to 'act'; the impossibility of making God the author of free will, which would amount to attributing the creation of Evil to Him), one must admit that, alongside the true God, there exists an evil principle which is the cause of Evil and of all corruption.

(°) It is well known that, for the Cathars, the angels sinned without any free **will;** they must *necessarily* have been corrupted — or enslaved — by the irresistible action of the evil principle.

'EXEMPLA' AND CATHAR MYTHS

Occitan Catharism has left us a number of 'exempla' and myths — likely borrowed from older folklore but reworked in a dualistic sense — which have been preserved to this day in popular tradition. They are of twofold interest: they sometimes provide the oldest known version (in Languedoc) of tales that still exist. Furthermore, when accompanied by an explanation that reveals their spiritual significance, they provide a better understanding of what the true Cathar doctrine was at the time when these tales helped to spread it. They also demonstrate that, for the Perfect Ones as well as for ordinary believers, the *exempla* were not to be taken literally, *as is sometimes claimed.* The Cathars obviously did not believe that the Devil was an owl, nor that Christ was **a pelican.**

I. — THE MYTH OF THE PELICAN

In the *Inquisition Register* of Bishop Jacques Foùrnier (Duvernoy edition, vol. 1, p. 358), we find the following exemplum:

There is a bird called a pelican, *which is as bright as the sun, and followed it* as if in a trance; *this bird had chicks, and when* it *fed them in* the nest *and they, driven by the sun*, followed it, *they would come*

a certain beast would tear the chicks apart and pluck out their beaks; and when the pelican returned *to its chicks,* finding *them torn apart and their beaks lost, it would heal them. And as this happened frequently, the pelican eventually resolved within himself to hide his nest, so that whilst it was concealed, he might protect his chicks; and when the said beast came, he would seize and slay it,* so that *it could* not *swiftly dismember those chicks or pluck their[. And so it came to pass. The young chicks were saved from the dismemberment that the beast had inflicted upon them, having been seized by the pelican itself.*

(Translation: 'There is a bird called the Pelican, which is as bright as the sun and follows the sun on its path. This bird had chicks which it left in the nest when it flew off to follow the sun. Then a certain beast would come along, tear the chicks apart and rip out their beaks. When the pelican returned, he would find them torn apart and beakless; and he would tend to them. This had already happened many times. The pelican then thought to himself that from now on he would hide his light and remain in the darkness alongside his young. When the beast appeared, he would capture it and kill it, so that it could no longer tear his young apart and pluck out their beaks. And so it came to pass. The young no longer had to suffer at the hands of the beast, thus captured by the pelican.'")

Thus: 1) The pelican is a luminous bird, whose *solar* nature is clearly emphasised here.

2) An evil beast — not otherwise identified — maims the pelican's young whilst it is busy 'following the sun'.

3) The pelican has the power to *heal* its young.

4) The pelican decides *to conceal* its light in order to take the beast by surprise.

5) The pelican captures the beast, and the chicks no longer have anything to fear from its malice...

It was easy for Cathar ministers to give the myth a spiritual meaning. Here is the one that appears in the second volume of the Inquisition (I, p. 358):

'The Good God created these creatures to be good, and the Evil God is bent on destroying them. This continued until Christ had laid aside or concealed his light *(deposuil nel abscondidil),* that is to say, until he had become incarnate in the Virgin Mary

('that he had taken flesh from the Virgin Mary'). Then he captured the evil god and cast him into the darkness of hell. And from that moment on, the evil god could no longer lead the creatures of the good God astray."

The legends on which this text is based are far older than the text itself. The pelican has been universally regarded as a symbol of Christ *(Pelicanus: Christus in* Passione, according to Melito). The Cathar reinterpretation of the early 13th century merely altered the traditional themes, giving them a heterodox meaning. What were these traditional themes? †

1) In the Latin **Physiologus** (published by Father Cahier), and in the French **Besliaires** by Philippe de Than, Guillaume de Normandie, Gervaise and Richard de Fournival ([1]), *the pelican itself eats its own chicks* after having struck them. (Christ, insulted by the chicks—his children—is first compelled to punish them.) We find the same tradition—a very orthodox one—in Epiphanius, Isidore, Hugh of Saint Victor *(De Besli is),* in Brunetto Latini and, finally, in the *Provençal Besliaire,* where we read the following:

Of the pelican. The pelican is *a bird that loves its chicks dearly, and when its chicks are old enough to spread their wings, they fly towards the pelican and* offer themselves *to it through its beak; and* the pelican, being *proud and of such a nature, devours them as well. And when he sees that they are dying, he feels great sorrow and raises his wing, opens* his *beak, and* sprinkles them *with* his *blood; and they come back to life.*

(Translation: The Pelican. The pelican is a bird that loves its young dearly. But when they see him approaching, they flap their wings and strike him in the eyes. The pelican is so proud and of such a nature that he kills them all. But when he sees them dead, he is overcome with great sorrow. He lifts his wing and, with his beak, tears open his side. He sprinkles them with his blood and they come back to life.)

2) The themes are somewhat different in the **Physiologus**

([1]) *Sermons and religious precepts in* the form of ***fables from the*** **11th** ***century,*** published for the first time by C. Chabaneau, Montpellier, 1885, pp. 62–63.

Greek (published by Dom Pitra) — where, incidentally, one also finds a version similar to those in the Latin *Physiologus* —. They differ from these on the following points:

a) *The pelican's nest is Paradise.*

b) *The young are killed* by *snakes* (Saint Epiphanius recounts that pelican chicks are killed by snakes, and that their fathers resurrect them by sprinkling them with their own blood).

c) The serpent kills the young *with its poisonous breath.* This latter tradition was very widespread in the Middle Ages: it is still found in a song by Thibault IV, Count of Champagne:

> God is like the pelican
> Who builds his nest in the highest tree
> above And the evil bird that comes from
> below Kills his chicks, leaving them
> *stinking* (•).

Sometimes the owl is substituted for the serpent, as is the case in a 12th-century Occitan sermon published by Chabaneau (•):

Our Lord is *like the pelican. Pellicanus is a bird that builds its* nest *of fine grasses which it gathers, whereas the corvus is a bird that builds its nest from the worst herbs it can find; it [builds its nest under the ground, and just as the pelican is its counterpart, it goes* to *seek whatever it can find, and when it returns, it kills* its *young in the nest, and weeps as he spreads his wing wide and freezes the tears of blood from* his *six months' suffering, which he pours into the birds' beaks, and revives them.*

The pelican's nest resembled Paradise, and the other nest, eternity. The birds were our Lord Himself. The blood was drawn from His Passion so that His friends might have eternal *life.*

('Our Lord is like the pelican. The pelican is a bird that lines its nest with all the good grasses it can find. *The nilicora* is another bird that lines its nest with the worst weeds it can find; and it builds its nest beneath that of the pelican. When its young are born, the pelican goes out to find food to give them. But when it returns, it finds them dead, poisoned *by* the *foul odour* of

[•) Sermons and Religious Precepts..., p. 63. (*)
Ibid., p. 20.

the other nest. Then it laments, raises its left wing, pierces its left side, from which three tears of blood flow. It places this blood on the birds, into their beaks; and thus it brings them back to life.

The pelican's nest symbolises Paradise, and the other nest symbolises Hell. The bird (the pelican) represents Our Lord. The blood represents his Passion, through which he rescues his friends from Hell.') The owl that appears here is well known in Tradition. It is the nycficoraz, or night raven (*Sicul* nicficornz *in* domictfiis; Da'cid, Ps., XL). What complicates matters somewhat is that as is often the case in the *Bestiary* of Christ , it has taken on completely opposite meanings: at times it symbolises Christ, at others the Adversary. For the *Solesmense 'Spicilegium',* it represents the Saint: *'N qcliCOYäx vir sanclus, in fideli bus despicabilis'* (Meliton; II, ö06). For Hugh of Saint Victor, it represents Jesus Christ himself: fysfice *nyclicorax Clirislum si gni fical {De Besliis,* I, 33). But for other religious writers, it is a figure of the devil: *Noclua, mens fallax* (Raban Maur) *Si gni fical Diabolum* (Thomas of Cantinmpré).

For the Cathars, as in modern folklore, the owl was regarded as a diabolical bird and a harbinger of ill omen: its cries foretold death:

'And when she was dying, two nocturnal birds known in the vernacular as *"qavecas" (*cavècas in Occitan: *clievêchcs, owls) came onto the roof and cried out above her bed; hearing this, she herself said that the devil had sent them to carry her away with him, as* the animal *of* the dying woman.' › ("And as she was dying, two nocturnal birds—known in the vernacular *as 'gauecas' (cavècas* in Occitan: clievêchcs, owls)—came upon the roof and cried out from there. She (the person giving the testimony), as soon as she had heard them, declared that they were devils who had come to take with them the soul of the said Dame Roque, who was about to die") *{Inquisition Register...* Vol. I, p. 388).

In the Cathar example, the evil beast is not identified. We do not know whether the Perfect One was thinking of a snake or an owl. But the beast that kills the pelican's young is clearly Evil.

The Pelican is the God of Good (•). The Cathars seem to have *invented* the motif of the solar bird, which follows the sun on its course. (Christ himself is 'solar'.) And also the fact *that it obscures its light.* This is the aspect that is of greatest interest. For, in Catharism, Christ did not *sacrifice himself* to save mankind — he simply 'saves' them by showing them the path to truth — and he did not take flesh in the Blessed Virgin. He simply took *shelter* within her (cf. the famous Cathar prayer: *'Dius deoalec del cel ab CII aposlols et adombrec-se en Sancla Maria.'* — Mr Duvernoy points out in this regard that there may be here a reference to the *Vision* of Isaiah, in which Jesus, in his descent to earth, takes on a form that is progressively diminished until it reaches the level of humanity: the evil angels do not recognise him 1) In any case, although the text of the example — or rather its 'explanation' — speaks of 'incarnation', Christ conceals his light in order to hide himself, and not in order to be *truly* born of a woman.

It should be noted that the two 'gods' referred to here (ip9e dixit quod erant duo dii scilicet deus bonus et deus malus — fieyisfre *d'Inquisition,* I, p. 358) — although both are 'principles' — are *nevertheless* only potential beings. Christ prevails over the Beast, the *Evil Principle.*

II. — THE MYTH OF THE 'DONKEY'S HEAD' B

This second *exemplum* is also taken from *the* Inquisition *Register of the monk Fournier* (II, p. 152).

Two travellers stop by a stream. One falls asleep, the other remains awake. The one keeping watch sees a lizard *(sinsola,* a grey lizard) emerge from the sleeper's mouth; it crosses the stream on a small twig and enters a dried-up donkey's head that happens to be lying there. This sequence is repeated two or three times: the lizard enters, emerges, explores the donkey's head...

(') The symbolism of the pelican has shown remarkable vitality. It has evolved from Christian iconography to heterodoxiconography. Wefind it among the *Rosicrucians* and even in *(Freemasonry).*

The traveller then has the idea of removing the branch, so that the lizard cannot return to his companion's body. The lizard, in a panic, searches in vain for its bridge. Meanwhile, the sleeper tosses and turns, but does not wake up. The traveller puts the branch back in place and the lizard hurries back into the man, who wakes up immediately.

He then tells his friend that he had crossed a river over a bridge; visited a palace with many towers, rooms and halls. But when he wanted to return, the bridge had vanished. It was then rebuilt shortly afterwards... In turn, the friend tells him what he observed whilst watching him sleep: a lizard came out of his mouth, crossed the stream on a branch, entered the skull of a dead donkey, and so on. Both are astonished by this. They go to consult an Old Man, who tells them:

a) that a man's soul remains attached to his body for as long as **he lives**;

b) but that *the Spirit* is separable from it: 'it comes and goes'.

The explanation provided by *Le Parfait* (III, p. 223) is largely in line with Cathar doctrine as we know it from other sources. According to classical Catharism (12th–13th centuries), the Spirit does not inhabit the body: indeed, it is *always* separate from it. Le Bonhomme therefore makes a huge misinterpretation by assuming that the transcendence of the Spirit simply amounts, for him, to the power 'to come and go' *within the body.* It is the soul, on the contrary, which, although bound to the body, has the ability to leave it momentarily. It is the soul alone that can 'come and go'.

Le Bonhomme, at the end of the 12th century, when Catharism was already in decline, did exactly as the Catholics did: he confused *the Spirit* with *the soul.* 'There are,' he says, 'two rational substances in man—the soul and the spirit (one fixed to the body, the other separable).' In the previous century, a learned Cathar would rather have said: 'There are two substances in man: one, rational, *the Espril* (from which true *thoughts* arise), which is not *in* the body and never enters it; the other, irrational, *the óme* (which has no thoughts other than

when it is enlightened by the Spirit). The soul is *within the body,* but it can leave it. ›

One gets the impression that in the time of the last Cathar ministers

(Bélibaste, Tavernier) this *'tzanstendanl' Spirit*—a sort of Double or guardian angel—was equated with some sort of benevolent spirit, *and was no longer* necessarily *considered part of the human composite being.* It is true, of course, that when the believer received the *Consolation, his* soul was supposed to **be reunited** with *his* spirit. Thus it was the object of a twofold spiritualisation: the first resulted from the 'marriage' of the soul with its spirit; the second, from the action exerted upon it *by the Holy Spirit* (a celestial entity). But here the Author seems to believe that at the moment of *the Consolamenlum,* the believer receives 'a good spirit', just as, in other circumstances, he might receive an evil one. ('If the believer,' he says, 'falls back into error or sin, the *good spirit departs* and an evil spirit takes its place.') This 'possession' of the soul—sometimes by a sort of angel, sometimes by a sort of devil—is more in keeping with the ideas of the Messalians than with those of the Cathars.

We must conclude that, by the beginning of the 15th century, the crucial concept of the human trinity *(body–soul–transcendent Spirit)* had become incomprehensible. The higher entity—the *Holy Spirit*—was also tending to lose its significance and to be conflated either with the 'spirit of man' or with any 'good spirit'. It must be acknowledged that it was difficult for ordinary people to make sense of this metaphysics. But one thing worth noting is that the Inquisitor, who himself had a thorough understanding of Catharism, posed the question in remarkably precise terms: 'The lizard that comes and goes,' he asked, 'is that *the spirit of man*?'

{spiritus horn inis), is it a created *spirit {spiritus creatus),* is it the *Holy Spirit, who is God* (God for the Inquisitor; a celestial entity for classical Catharism), *the* ***Holy*** *Spirit* ***who*** **is** ***Deus?'***

I believe that a more learned Perfect One, a Guillabert de Castres, for example, would never have equated the *Spiritus* hominis with a grey lizard, nor, a fortiori, the *Spiritus Sanctus.* The lizard could only be the image of the separable soul.

The general theme of the separable soul (°) (sometimes equated with the vital principle) is well known in folklore. This principle could be kept safe in a secret place, deposited in a solid part of the body (a tooth, for example) or entrusted to another living organism.

In the form it takes here, the Cathar example—intended precisely to demonstrate that the vital principle is 'separable'—certainly predates Catharism. And in any case, we are not dealing with an 'archetype'.

The Celts and the Germanic peoples had quite similar myths. 'Among the Celts, the soul is a *gnat* or a *white mouse*. It emerges through the mouth, but only at the moment of death. It wanders through the house, makes its way into the countryside where it must do penance in a tree or on a gorse thorn' (Anatole le Braz, **La légende de la Mort**, pp. 185–201).

— Gontran, son of Clotaire, having fallen asleep with his head resting on a servant's lap, saw a small snake emerge from his mouth; it crossed a stream and entered a hole in the mountain. It returned, and Gontran awoke. Gontran recounted what he had seen in the mountain. The result of this dream was the discovery of a treasure.

— Maurice O'Sullivan, in *Vinyf *ans de Jeunesse** (Gal-

(•) The concept of the 'separable soul', and above all the distinction between the 'Spirit' and *the 'soul'*, appears in many 'orthodox' texts of the Middle Ages. In *the Homily on* Saint *Mary Magdalene,* attributed to Origen or to Saint Anselm, and translated into Provençal in the 12th century, it is clear that the Spirit is regarded primarily as *the principle of* knowledge, and the soul as merely the principle *of life*:

In the end, when Joseph *laid his heart in* the tomb, *Mary too laid her spirit* there, *and* into it *she placed the little one, just as one might place one's weapon when parting from* one's *living body—for her spirit was the lover of that now-dead body. And whilst he was saying this,* he *was asking* for *her spirit; she, having lost* her *body, had lost her spirit. Such wonders were* so *unknown to her that, having no spirit, how* could *she* possibly *know?*

(At the end, when Joseph laid your body in the tomb (the author is addressing Jesus Christ), Mary (Magdalene) laid her *spirit* there at the same time. And she united it so closely with your body that it would have been easier for her to separate her *soul* from her living body than for *her spirit,* which loves you, to be separated from your dead body. And when she was searching for your body, it was also your Spirit that she was seeking. For where she had lost your body, she had lost your Spirit. Why should we be surprised that she did not recognise you, since she no longer possessed the Spirit by which she might have recognised you † (C. Chabaneau: *Saint Mary Magdalene in Provençal Literature,* Montpellier, 1885, pp. 46–48.)

Limard, 1936), recounts a tale, no doubt borrowed from Irish folklore, which, under the title *'The Horse's Head',* reproduces more or less exactly the myth used in the 14th century by the Cathars:

‹ ... A friend falls asleep beside him. A *white* snake emerges from his mouth; after climbing the bars of a grille, it enters the skull of an old horse through one of its eye sockets, emerges through the jaw, and then returns to the mouth. At that very moment, he wakes up (followed by the friend's account, recounting his awakening and his adventures in 'a large house that shone...') (pp. 19–20).

The separable soul is a lizard, a gnat, a mouse, a butterfly, a snake, a bat, a bee, etc. In one form or another, it recurs in Occitan folklore with considerable frequently. In **Contes populaires dr. la Grande L.ande** by Félix Arnaudin (1st series, Bordeaux, 1966), under the title *Le Pére* (a rather ill-chosen title), the following story, which I summarise as follows:

'Two travellers. One of them falls asleep. A fly emerges from the sleeper's mouth and enters the skeleton of a *horse's skull* lying not far away. The fly returns. The sleeper wakes up and says: "I dreamt I was in a castle... and beneath that castle was a treasure." ' So the two men lifted the horse's head, dug beneath it and discovered the treasure there *(la bels,* aqiiifs *dus omis que luvèren aquel cap e qu'i Ironbèren un gran Irésor de bal* — p. 22ff).

Finally, it is worth highlighting the structure of these *exempla* or tales, which is relatively invariant — it is still used today, unconsciously, by authors of fantasy stories — and which, as such, is of interest to folkloric structuralism.

It consists of establishing a dual *verification:* the invisible *'subject i'* (the sleeper's dream) is authenticated by its correspondence with the objective behaviour of the sleeper (and of the animal emerging from him) *as observed* by the one who is awake. Furthermore, the *reality* of the thing seen in the dream is confirmed by the unexpected—and utterly unpredictable—discovery of a treasure or *some other material object.*

Here, there is only one form of verification. The authenticity of the invisible adventures experienced by the sleeper is proven — to the person to whom they are recounted — by their *correspondence* with what that person has observed for themselves. The Cathar, seeking merely to demonstrate that the soul is separable, had no need — to appeal to the reader's imagination — to resort to additional proof through the discovery of an object. In the following *example (the lost horse),* it is, on the contrary, the object found where it was left that convinces the imagination.

III. — THE LOST HORSE'S HOOF

This *example* appears to be specifically Cathar in nature because it belongs to a context that can only be reincarnationist.

'A very wicked man, a murderer, had, after his death, entered the body of an ox which his master treated very harshly. He remembered having been a man. He then passed into the body of a horse belonging to a wealthy lord; and he was less miserable. One day, the lord's enemies stormed his house. He mounted the horse and fled through rocky and wild terrain. The horse's hoof became wedged between two stones, and it could only free itself by shedding its horseshoe. Subsequently, the spirit entered the womb of a pregnant woman and was reborn as the child she was carrying. When he reached adulthood, he attained the *'endensa del Den'* (the knowledge of what is Good) and became a believer. One day, whilst passing with his companion by the spot where, when he was a horse, he had lost the horseshoe, he remembered and told the other man. Both set about searching for it and found it" *(Register of the Inquisition of Bishop Fournier,* II, p. 36).

Variant: 'A man was resting and eating by
a fountain with his followers: he told them that he remembered having been a horse and having drunk from that fountain. One day, when his master had spurred him hard, he sank his right foot into the mud. He could only pull it out by leaving the horseshoe behind.
'Let's see,' he said, 'if we can find that horseshoe!' All the

believers set about searching, and it was not long before they discovered it' *(Reg. de l'Inquisition,* III, p. 138).

Variant: Another uninteresting version. It is the same story, but simplified: we are not told that the soul was first incarnated as an ox. Furthermore, here the master pursues his enemies rather than being pursued by them (II, p. 408).

This myth is clearly intended to reinforce belief in reincarnation. It implies that very wicked men may be reincarnated as animals. It also suggests that, for this reason, one must not kill or mistreat animals.

These three versions deal solely with reincarnation in higher animals. Although late Catharism seems to have accepted quite readily that the soul could enter the body of any animal, except perhaps *the snake, the toad or the owl*—which were regarded as essentially satanic—we find that the *worst of men,* the murderer, is reincarnated here as a noble animal: the ox, the horse.

It may be the belief in the *possible* incarnation of demons in owls, snakes, toads or cats that sometimes led the less educated Cathars to accept as well — though exceptionally — the passage of souls lost *to God* into animals as lively and 'wicked'

IV. — THE SQUIRREL

I am not sure whether this little tale should be classified as an *exempla.* I include it here with the previous one because it shows the same respect for animals.

'Two heretics passing through a forest saw a squirrel caught in a trap and still alive. They set the animal free. But they did not wish to deprive the hunter of his earnings so they left near the trap the equivalent in silver of what the squirrel might have been worth" *(Registre d'Inquisition...,* II, p. 107).

Variant: the trapped animal is a cockerel or a hen (I II, pp. 306–307).

As Mr Duvernoy points out, this moral dilemma was anticipated in the *Ritual,* which, incidentally, resolves the difficulty quite differently: 'If one finds an animal caught in a trap, one need not worry about it' (Occitan Ritual). The ezempïa concerning the squirrel reflects a much purer and more scrupulous moral code, since
it spares both the animal's life and the hunter's interests.

Y. — THE UNICORN

We do not believe that the unicorn referred to in the southern bestiary is always 'heretical', although it differs greatly from the unicorn of the Nordic countries—a gentle and chaste animal that has come to symbolise Jesus Christ.

'It is the wildest beast there is. No one would dare approach it from behind because of the horn on its head. It takes such pleasure in sniffing out the scent of maidens and virginity that when hunters wish to capture it, they place a young virgin in its path. At the sight of her, it comes to lie down in her lap, and there it is, caught!' *(Provençal Bestiary).* Leonardo da Vinci, who, it seems, was familiar only with the
'southern' tradition, had made this monster the symbol of intemperance. 'The unicorn,' he said, 'cannot control itself; through the pleasure it derives from young maidens, it forgets its ferocity and savagery; casting all fear aside, it approaches the seated maiden and falls asleep upon her breast.'

The tale of the man pursued by the lion enjoyed extraordinary popularity in the Middle Ages, and the Cathars appear to have adopted it, whilst slightly altering its mythical context. In the **Roman de Barlaam et Josayhal*,* which, in its earliest Eastern versions, was influenced by
Manichaeism, and in its 13th-century Occitan version, that of the Cathar beliefs of the time, we read something like this

'When the man saw this beast called *the unicorn* coming towards him, he began to flee, fearing he would be devoured by it. And whilst he was running, it so happened that he fell into a pit, but as he fell he clung to a tree and held on to it tightly. In this pit there was a tree stump where he took refuge
his feet. And as he considered his situation, he saw two rats,

one white and the other black, which were already gnawing at the root of this tree and had gnawed it so much that it was on the verge of giving way. Examining the depth of the pit, he saw that at the bottom there was a dragon with a fierce gaze, breathing fire from its open maw as it prepared to devour him. Looking again, he noticed that *four serpent heads* were emerging from the stump upon which he was standing. Looking up, he finally saw that a trickle of honey was dripping from the tree to which he was clinging; and for the sake of the honey's sweetness, he forgot all the evils that surrounded him. This is a parable of all those who love this world.'

This fable is addressed to those who wish to be like 'years *friends of God*'. 'They must despise the world and all that it contains, for *it* is *vanity*.' Undoubtedly, the material world is all the more despicable to the novelist insofar as it offers less 'reality' (it is nothingness and vanity: ment e ranefafz). In a Catholic exemplum published by Chabaneau, one finds no trace of the same spiritual atmosphere (•). The emphasis there is not on the nothingness *of the world,* but on divine help, in which the sinner must place all his trust. Nor are the 'explanations' quite the same. It is quite significant that, for the Catholic, the *pit* into which man has fallen is *hell,* whilst for the author of Barlaom *el Josaphal,* it symbolises 'this world full of all manner of evils' *{La [ossa figura aquest mont que es plens de lolz* mafs). Hell — or rather the 'belly of hell' — corresponds to the satanic realm represented by the *Dzagon* (who is also the Devil for the Catholic author), but the *four serpents* appear only in the parable of *Darlaam and Josaphat,* where they correspond to the four *elements in conflict within the body and which cannot coexist in peace: {the four discordant elements).* It is a Manichaean idea that the elements, corrupted by the Principle of Evil, fight one another within the human body, and everywhere else in the world.

(•) **C. Chabaneau, Sermons *and Precepts Collected* at the End *of* the *12th* century...** 1885, p. 78.

V

OMNIA MALA AND NIHILISM

regarding Miss Thouzellier's article
'The Cathars of Languedoc: "They are not of the world" (John 1:3)'
(Annales – Economies, Societies,
Civilisations, January–February **1969)**

1. NIHÆL * AS ORIGIN

'Without the Word, nothing came into being,' declares Origen; 'Evil is opposed to Good, to Being. All malice is "nothing" because it is without the Word, and the Devil is "nothing" or non-being'. This is how M. Thouzellier explains it in her article – *'The Languedoc Cathars and* ***Nihilism'.*** Yet it is difficult to understand why the eminent heresiologist, having posited that the *'omnia mala'* (all evils) created outside of God are opposed to *the* 'omnia *bona',* and having consequently admitted that, for the Cathars, *'omnia mala'* are ***'nihil',*** she is unwilling to admit, at the same time, that for Origen—whom she quotes—*'omnia* ***mala***' are also ***'nihil'.*** *'Omnia* ***mala,*** *' she says, 'are not* nihil.' ' But since she has just asserted that *'omnia mala are* nihil', I really cannot see how she reconciles this. 1 In truth, although there are considerable differences between Origen's non-being and *the* Cathar *nihil*, which I have pointed out in my Chapter II, this non-being, this 'nothing' that is evil, is nonetheless something, since it stands in opposition—as it does for the Cathars—to the Good and to being. If the Devil were nothing at all, there would be no point in waging war against him: he is obviously, for Origen as for Bartholomew, *a being* possessing infinitely less *being than the* King *of God,* but a *being nonetheless.* And that is why it seems necessary to me to translate the verse from John 1:3, *as read by*

Origen: '*Without him,* nothing *was* made that has been made' (that is to say, relative nothingness), in the sense I have described. For my part, I would not have called upon Origen for help, because I am not sure that the Cathars drew much upon him. But Saint Augustine, in whom Mr Thouzellier refuses to see a possible source
of dualist ontology, held views that were quite similar, and which the Cathars were certainly familiar with (cf. *Augustinianism and Catharism:* 'The less a thing has of being, the closer it is to nothingness', *Quo* minus *est,* tanto proximius *est nihilo, Against Secundinus,* XI).

2. PIERRE ÀUZIER AND THE c OMNIA MALA A

I have already mentioned that Pierre Autier (who was flogged in 1311) held views on 'evil universals' that were very similar to those of Bartholomé de Carcassonne and Jean de Lugio. It is worth returning to this subject. *Jacques Fournier's Inquisition Register* records the terms in which he contested the Catholic interpretation of the verse from John that a certain Arnaud Tesseire had put forward against him. I do not find it very clear how Mr Thou-zellier, in the article already cited, sets out the arguments of both men. 'Instead,' he says, 'of assuming that the heretic translates **nili** as **omn ta** to supposedly give substance to what was nothing, it seems, on the contrary, evident that in his explanation, the Cathar, by omitting the negation and rendering the sentence in the affirmative, intended to demonstrate—as the Languedoc treatise (that of Bartholomew) had done a century earlier—that, in contrast to God's 'omnio-work', there is another *'omni'* created without Him... ' But of course, who has ever said otherwise? There are, in fact, for Catharism, two totalities: *one eternal* and *incorruptible, the other mutable against a backdrop of nothingness.* It is Mademoiselle Thouzellier's reasoning that eludes me: the heretic certainly does not *translate 'nihil'* as 'omnia', but he equates the content of 'omnin' with
nihil, as all Cathars do — and Mlle Thouzellier
herself — and he does indeed ascribe 'an entity', whatever she may say, to that which is 'nothing'.

Let us recall the text: the Catholic (Arnaud Tesseire) quotes *the Gospel of* John: 'All *things (omnia)* were made through him, and without him nothing *(nihil)* was made. ' This is the orthodox interpretation. Autier objects: 'No, "All things — *the multitude* — were made through him (*omnia per i plum facta* stinï), but one must also say that "all things — the evil ones — were made without him" (et quod *eliam . omnia eranl [acta sine* eo). Autier clearly replaces *'nihil'* with *'omnia'* in the second clause (et sine *ipso factum* est nihil), since this second term can obviously mean nothing else to him but: 'without him, relative nothingness was made, that is to say, omnia *mala,* all evil things'. However, Mr Thouzellier's translation is so ambiguous that I challenge anyone to make sense of it, given that it never specifies whether it is translating according to the Cathar interpretation or the Catholic interpretation. By translating: 'All things were made through him and even (†) all things were made without him', she seems to be attributing to Autier the view that, for both God and the Devil, it is the same *'omnia'* that is meant, which is absolutely contrary to what we know the Cathars believed (the 'omnia *bona'* are not *'nihil')* and to what Ms Thouzellier herself has just stated: 'Opposite *the 'omnia',* the work of God, there is another 'omnia' made without Him. ' It would therefore have been necessary, it seems to me, to at least include a footnote: 'All (evil) things were made without him', and to explain that this reading *presupposes the Cathar interpretation.—'And without him, nothingness (relative) was made',* an affirmative sentence with *'nihil'* taken as a noun. For by translating it as Ms Thouzellier does:

'Without him, nothing *has been created—that is to say, all things that have been created' {src}*—this presents a glaring contradiction that leaves any honest reader, whether Catholic or Cathar, dumbfounded. It is clear that, in the second part of the sentence, Pierre Autier equates *'omnia mala'* with 'nihil' (which effectively subjects all evil things to a relative *nullification*). If we translate this literally: 'All things were made through him, but also all things were made without him', one must at the very least explain that this is Pierre Autier's way of setting the two universals against one another: the set of good things and the set of bad things (the latter constituting the *'nihil')* - which seems to me, all the same, clearer. Excessive adherence to the letter of the text — which is, as

De Bonald put it, the enslavement of the mind — leads NI Thouzellier, moreover, to commit some very curious misreadings. In the 7th line (note 2, p. 134) of his article, one must clearly read *'polestis'* and not *'proleslis' (quomodo hoc poleslis* dicerc?). The error is quite excusable. But how could he have been so easily satisfied with the meaning provided by this grammatical monstrosity: *'How do you protest—you say?' (sic),* which renders the entire argument *ineffective, contradictory and absurd?*

Never mind! The fact remains that, for Pierre Autier as for Bartholomé, the Cathar hypothesis does indeed consist in making evil both nothing and something. *Omnia mala — niùif; nihil — omnia mula.*

How can one explain the horror displayed by Maître Thouzellier towards the Cathar *substitution* of 'niúif', which is, after all, a *[noun]?* When substantialised, 'niúif' is so in two respects. Firstly, grammatically: 'nihil' here is the equivalent of a noun:
'fe niútf'. Secondly, it is so objectively and in the common sense of the word, since, as I have shown throughout this essay, it corresponds to a reality, undoubtedly corruptible and relatively reduced to nothingness, but ultimately *perceptible* to the fleshly eye and underpinned by a principle that is itself reduced to nothingness, at least as much as Saint Augustine's rebellious archangel, yet *eternal* (or rather, without beginning or end). The 'omna *mala',* as temporal, vain and corruptible things, are 'ni/ii'ed and not annihilated, 'néantisées' and not destroyed. They do not, as I have already stated in Chapter II, possess true being because, according to Saint John (as interpreted by the Cathars), they were not made by the true God, who alone can create ***incorruptible*** *essences.*

VI

OCCITAN VOCABULARY OF CATHARISM

A parelhamenl.

This word also forms part of the vocabulary of Catholicism. 'Ara d'Onchs *aparella-t* e confessa-t, que dema a tal hora la veiras' (the Virgin Mary): *Works of Saint Vinceni Fermier,* Paris, 1909, vol. I, p. 62.

It means: preparation, from **aparelhar*:* to prepare, to prepare oneself for ('by going to confession, one "apparelha-d oneself", that is to say, one readied oneself anew for a stricter observance of the rules of the perfect life ' (C. Schmidt). Perhaps also: 'to raise oneself to the level of, to equal' (Duvernoy).

Although the Cathars believed that one should confess only to God, and did not recognise the usefulness of works of satisfaction, they did, however, admit that confession and penance were a way for the faithful to bring themselves into line with their church, which claimed to uphold perfect purity (Schmidt).

The 'aparelhamenl' was a public and solemn non-sacramental — confession — which took place once a month. According to C. Schmidt, it was intended for believers and also for the Perfect, who had not sinned against the Holy Spirit (and therefore did not need to receive the *consolamenlum* again), but simply against the rules of the church. According to M. Duvernoy, the aparelhamenl was reserved for the Perfect, although believers were permitted to attend.

The ceremony comprised — at least for sins

— an individual confession, but before the assembly of the Perfect and the believers. For lesser offences, a single person spoke on behalf of all, following the very beautiful formula of *the Ritual.* Absolution was granted en masse.

The penalties imposed consisted of prayers accompanied genuflections, fasting, and the obligation to attend sermons...

For Mr Duvernoy, the 'apare/ùamenf' was the private of the Perfects before the deacon, or before the bishop, or before one of his two coadjutors (the *Greater Son and the Lesser Son).* It was from one of them that they received penance. The author sees in this ceremony a remnant of the Eastern Christian rites of the 4th century, and notes, following certain Slavic historians, similarities between this 'Cathar confession' and the rites prescribed by the rule of Saint Basil. The ceremony — when it coincided with a gathering of believers — was preceded, according to Mr Duvernoy, by a *blessing* and followed by a sermon and the *Kiss of Peace.* The ceremony is also known as *Seruisi.*

ken, the Good.

The 'enlendeiisa del Ben', the 'cntendeinent', the knowledge of the 'J3ien'; adherence to the Cathar sect. Knowing where the 'bien' is, even if one does not yet have the power to attain it, is the first stage of liberation.

Carefns.

This expression: *[nr* (or *{aire)* fus *carelas,* is never translated into Latin in Jacques Fournier's Inquisition *Register.* Mr Duvernoy believes it means 'to do acts of charity' *(curilals),* but this is hardly tenable. The scribe would surely have written *'carelals'* (or *'carilals'),* because, in the Occitan word, the final syllable is stressed, and because, in Ariège, even today, the final 'ï' is clearly audible. Should *'carelas'* be understood as a diminutive of *'cara'*, meaning 'face' or 'figure'?

'Far las carelas' is said to be a colloquial and 'popular' expression meaning roughly: 'to pull faces, to make facial expressions', the 'pulling faces'. Whilst the word itself may be obscure, the concept is less so.

Mr Duvernoy defined it perfectly:

'Caretas is a kiss of peace exchanged between the Perfect Ones and believers following solemn gatherings: sermons, services, consofamenfum. Between people of the same sex, it consisted of an embrace accompanied by two alternating tilts of the head, *cheek* to *cheek*, and ending with a kiss across the mouth *(bis* in *ore ex IransverSo)*. Between
people of different sexes, it consisted of kissing the sleeve, the shoulder or the Lirre. By the end of the 12th century, the *carelas* had either supplemented the *melioramenlum* or replaced it outright, as they were considered less 'compromising' (J. Duvernoy, **La liturgie et l'église cathare**, *Cahiers d'études cathares*, 2nd series, No. 35, 1967, p. 21).

Anselm of Alexandria *(Tracfalus de Herelicis,* ed. A. Don-daine) translates 't accolade' as the Provençal word *'caron'*. This word does not exist: should we understand it as 'cara', meaning 'face' † (accolade: face to face †)?

Caritat, charity.

We would not love God if God had not loved us first: God is charity. Drawing on John *{1 John,* 4,
16) *'Deus charifas est, qui* manif iB cùari/nfe in *Deo* manef', the Cathars believed that charity and love were part of God's very essence. It is for this reason that they regarded the 'supersubstantial' bread of the Lord's Prayer as charity itself: 'Charity is called
'supersubstantial bread' because it is above all other substances' (*Cathar gloss on the Paler,* Ms A.6.10 of the Dublin Vaudois collection, ed. Th. Venckeleer). (See also: *Paul, I, Com.,* XIII, 4–7.)

Charity constitutes the substance of beings created by the God of Goodness; this is why the Cathar Bartholomew, author of the Treatise cited by Durand of Huesca, asserts that all beings who lack charity are *nihil,* that is to say, relative nothingness, and that they do not possess the fullness of being which is attached solely to

incorruptible essences created by the Good God, from his own substance. 'If all evil spirits, wicked men and all things that can be seen in this world are nothing but rii?tiI (relative nothingness) because they are without charity, it is because they were made without God (outside of God). ' The two authorities invoked by Bartholomew are: Paul (1 *Cor.* **13)**: 'If I have not love, I am a ni/tif' (a quasi-nothing), and John (1:3): 'Without him was made that which is the ni/tif' (relative nothingness).

Con[ortodor* (or *con[orloiye).

The *Comforter* is the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth whom Jesus Christ promised to send to the apostles (John 14:16–14:26). *The Comforter, the Holy Spirit*, is the Holy Spirit who comforts.

Consolation.

This spiritual baptism (as opposed to John's baptism by water) was conferred by the laying on of hands, according to rites reminiscent of those of the early Church (minus the material elements: water, anointing with oil); it was the essential ceremony of Catharism: it brought the consolation of the Paraclete *in accordance with* the *apostolic* tradition.

Alain de Lille rightly distinguished, **in** the **11th** century—as does Mr Jean Duvernoy today—between the 'consolamenfum' or baptism of the Perfect Ones and the *'consolamenlum'* or baptism of the dying (or the 'consoled'), even though the rites were exactly the same. The baptism of the Perfects signified for them entry into the Cathar orders and the voluntary renunciation of worldly things; the *baptism of the dying* or *the 'consoled',* administered only to the dying, gave them the hope that their sins were forgiven and that they were on the path to salvation (which it did not automatically guarantee). If the dying person survived, this *'consolation'* became null and void, and they had to either resume their life as a simple believer or prepare to receive, in the longer term, the *'consolation'* of the Perfect Ones.

The Perfect Women also received the *consolamenlum,* and could, in certain circumstances, confer it in turn.

Convenenza, agreement, pact.

Through the *canvenenza,* the believer agreed with the Cathar Church that he would be consoled at the hour of his death, even if he were not in full possession of his faculties and unable to recite the *Lord's Prayer* aloud. This *convenenza* must have come into use around the middle of the 13th century, that is to say at a time when, due to war and persecution, believers were often in mortal danger.

Durablelal.

Always denotes 'the eternal' in Cathar treatises.

Enduza.

This word means: deprivation, fasting. A sort of mystical suicide that is in no way reprehensible: to leave this life out of love for the Divine has always been the aspiration of true spiritual seekers in all religions.

In the 13th century, it sometimes happened that Cathars who hated the world and had only a few days left to live would let themselves die of hunger, after receiving the *'consolamenlum',* because they were no longer able to recite the *Lord's Prayer,* before eating and drinking, as they were required to do, and because they feared that, by falling back into sin, they might lose the benefit of the relative and provisional sanctification they had received from God and from circumstances, without having truly 'merited' it.

This form of penance usually consisted of allowing oneself to die of starvation or from the cold (more rarely). It was never encouraged by the Perfects, nor, a fortiori, imposed by them. Moreover, it only became widespread towards the end of the 13th century, and particularly in the County of Foix, under the influence of the pastor Pierre Autier, at a time when the Inquisition was, moreover, making life impossible for believers.

Esperil, spirit.

The spirit is, first and foremost, the incorruptible part of the angelic (and human) triad of spirit, soul and body, which remains in heaven, unblemished and eternally saved.

It is also the Holy Spirit — Sancf *esperit* — identified with *the Paraclete* or Comforter, whom the Cathar receives during the *consolamenlum.*

Finally, the 'esperif *princi pal*' (where 'principal' means, in Occitan,
princi pal, princi piel, or simply *'precious') is* equated with the third person of the Trinity (created by the Father and subordinate to the Father). He awaits the Cathar in heaven.

(In the spiritual novel **Barlaam and Josaphat*,* we read:
'When the almighty Father saw this (the ravages wrought by the devil), he sent his blessed Son to earth, namely the Holy Spirit, who descended into the womb of the Virgin (fo *sien bengzele filh, so es lo Sam Esperil qui* renc *el ventre de la Verqe).* This assertion is not orthodox. The idea that the Son of God is the Holy Spirit, that the Saviour is the universal spirit, is of Gnostic origin: it had been adopted by Manichaeism and by Catharism. It is likely that the sentence in question belongs to an ancient Manichaean version of the novel known to the early Cathars and accepted by them.)

Mali gnilol, moral evil, evil as a principle.

The totality of evil things, the *nihil* (the nullified substance of the malevolent creation). *Tolas caiisas de mali gni-lai:* these are the 'omnia mofa'. In verse I, 3, of Scan:
'Tolas causus son [ailas per lui e senes lui es [aile n rents', where 'n tenls' means: *Tolas causas de mali qnilal.*

Melhorament, improvement (among the Waldensians:
melioramenlum de peccalis).

The *'melhoramenl'* or 'adoration' was, amongst the Cathars, the greeting that the believer addressed to the Perfect One as soon as he

found himself in his presence. He 'worshipped' in him (in the liturgical sense, not in the theological or idolatrous sense) the good or the presence of the Holy Spirit. But the *'melhoramenl'* was at the same time a prayer through which the believer *asked God for* the grace to be improved and perfected.

It consisted of three bows or genuflections and a request for a blessing: 'don *creslia balhOlS-f2OS) God's blessing* and *yours; pray for us!* 'Good Christian (this is how the believer addressed the Priest), grant us God's blessing and yours; pray for us!' The good Christian would reply: *'Receive it from God and from us!* › (Receive it from God and from us!) The believer repeated his request three times. On the third occasion, he expressed the wish to be led to a good end and to become a good Christian. And the Perfect One replied: 'May God grant you to become a good Christian! *May God lead you to* a *good* end *and make you a good Christian!)* As the believer thus asked to be led to a good end, one may assume that the first *'melhorament'* was accompanied by a *'convenenza'* or that it implied one. This rite perfectly expresses the believer's situation. He is not yet in a position to become a 'saint', but he aspires to attain liberation one day. As Catharism did not believe in free will, these good dispositions he displayed in the *melhO-* demonstrated his *current* moral progress and indicated that he was beginning to be 'loved by God'.

Nien, neien, ment, néant.

Like 'ni/tif' in Latin, 'nothing' in Occitan is sometimes the equivalent of a negation (not...), and sometimes a masculine noun: nothingness. (A die *c-om es niens despueis que perl* f'afen (Uc de Saint Circ): And he said that man is nothing as soon as he has lost the breath of life.) The word generally takes an 's' in the nominative case.

'Ncien' also translates the adverb *'nihil'* when used as a noun: *'nihil',* and is then equivalent to 'ni/iifum' (noun): nothingness. *'Ef* stne *ipso faclum est nihil': 'E senes lui es [ailz niens].* And without him, that which is nothingness was made.'

For the Cathars, *'niens'* is by no means absolute nothingness, but

all things and evil spirits, and those lacking in being, which were created without God's will and apart from Him.

Orazon, the Lord's Prayer, the Pater.

To recite the prayer, to pass on the Lord's Prayer, is to grant the believer the right — and the duty — to recite the Lord's Prayer.
Heceôre

!. OT't2ZOn: to receive this right.

Pan, the bread of life: *'I am the bread of life'* (John 6:48), the supersubstantial bread: *'Pray that your bread may be sufficient for your needs'* (Matthew 6:7).

The Cathar *Lord's Prayer* asked God, instead of our daily bread, for the *panem supersubstantialem.* The commentary on this prayer, which appears in the Latin *Ritual,* states: 'By supersubstantial bread we mean the law of Christ, which was given to all peoples.'

Blessing *of the bread:* the meals that the Perfect Ones took, either alone or in the company of the faithful, were preceded by a ritual breaking of the bread accompanied by the recitation of *the Lord's Prayer.* The ceremony took on a solemn character (in remembrance of the Last Supper), but was not equivalent to the Eucharist. The faithful did not eat the body of Christ.

Pan si gnat: the Cathars sometimes called these pieces of bread, thus blessed and distributed, 'par *si gnal'*, or 'signed' bread. However, the Perfect Ones did not make the sign of the cross. They therefore preferred this bread to be referred to as *'panis sanclae oraliof2lS {IO päR dc la sancla orazon)',* or *'panis /rac-tionis'*: the bread of the breaking.

Salhanas.

Sometimes distinguished from Lucifer.

In the *(Orthodox) 'Treatise on the Names of the Mother of God'* appearing in the Didot manuscript and published by Paul Meyer in 1880, in his edition of *Daurel and Belon,* we read, in stanza XI I:

Saï/inn e *Lucifer [pronounced 'dana'.*

(Satan and Lucifer are wounded by your horns.)
The Virgin is here rather curiously compared to a ram.
You are *very beautiful in the Christian faith.*

Servisi, see *A parelhamenl.*

*Ve*i/acioris* (lac), the 'visitations', that is to say the divine virtues, light and mercy, as they are revealed through grace to the souls of men.

God is the Father of mercy, that is to say, of the *visitations.*

Venta, a Latin *word* (forgiveness) and an Occitan term. Ritual bows or genuflections which could signify 'petitions for grace or forgiveness' (D. Roché). They would bow *in reverence, lifting their eyes* from *the ground, and then raising their hands together in prayer...* (Then bowing together, genuflecting) *(Life of Saint Douceline).*

Virtul (El feu nom mouJas virlul – [ezem, ùlattli., 7, 23]), miracle.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ac (P. — *Remarks upon the Ecclesiastical* History *of the Ancient* Churches *of the Albigensians,* 1821.
Reprint: Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1962.

Augustine (St): *Works,* Vol. XVII: *Six Anti-Manichaean Treatises* (Translated by R. Jolivet and M. Jourjon). Paris, Desclée de Bronzer, 1961.

BABUT (E.-Chr): *Pristillianism or Priscillianism.* Paris, 1909.

Barlaam and Josaphat. Trans. Nelli-Lavaud. 'Les Troubadours', vol. I, Paris, 1960.

BORGHI (Luciana): **La fin qua della Bibbia di Lione*.* *Cultura neo-latina, fasc. 1–2, vol. XXX, Modena, 1970.

BORST (A.): *Die Halharer.* Stuttgart, 1953. French translation *of the Cathars* (Ch. Roy). **Paris,** Payot, 1974.

BURCE SALVI: *'Supra stella',* in Döllinger, *Beiträge*, vol. II.

Cahiers de Fanjeaux, no. 3, *Cathars* in *Languedoc.* Toulouse, Privat, 1968.

CLEDxT (L.): *The Testament translated in the 12th century into the Provençal language,* followed by a Cathar ritual. Photolithographic reproduction. Paris, 1887.

Dxmo (M.): The *Origins of Catharism.* Paris, Éditions du Pavillon, lon, 1967.

— Ynosphic *Remnants in a Latin Text:* the Adrian and Epic-titus. Cahiers d'études cathares, 2nd series, no. 58, summer 1973.

— *Gnostics of Egypt, the Priscillianists of Spain and the early Church* of India. Cahiers d'études cathares, 2nd series, no. 56, winter 1972.

DoxDAINE (.), O.P.: **Le Sicer de duobus principiis** (a 13th-century Neo-Manichaean treatise, followed by a fragment of a Cathar ritual), Istituto storico domenicano, Santa Sabina, Rome, 1939.

D UVERNOV (J•) *: On the Inquisition of Jacques Fournier,* (1318–1323), 3 vol. Bibliothèque méridionale. Toulouse, Privat, 1965.

The *Gospel of* John, edited by Peter **Wanderli. Paris,** Klinck-Sieck, 1969.

GUIRAUD (J.): *History of the Inquisition in* the Middle Ages, vol. I, Paris, 1933, vol. II, Paris, 1938.

Jaspers (K.): *The Great French Philosophers* — *St Augustine,* trans. French. Paris, Pion, 1963.

Liber soliloquiorum animae *ad Deum.* Migne, Patr. XL.

LIMBORG (P. van): *Hisloria IRQiltS* tltof2 *fr.* Amsterdam, 1692.

NELLI (R.): *Cathar Writings.* Paris, Planète, 1968.

— *Evil Nature in 12th-century Cathar dualism* —

On the Inequality of the Two Principles. Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Toulouse, Papers of the Laboratory of Ethnology and Occitan Civilisation, No. 1, Toulouse, 1969.

— *On Some Obscure* Points *in the Book of the Two Principles.* Published 'Folklore', 1973.

ORIGIN: *Medieval Commentaries on St* John, II, 94–96. Edited and translated by Cécile Blanc, Sources chrétiennes No. 120, Paris, 1966.

PRixoV (Borislav): **Les Bougres*, *History of the Bogomil Pope and his followers,* translated by M. Ribeyrol. Paris, Payot, 1975.

Roche (D.): *The Roman Church and the Albigensian Cathars.* Published by Cahiers d'études cathares. Arques (Aude), 1937.

RUNGIMAN (St.): *Medieval Manichaeism. A Dualist Heresy within* Christianity. Paris, Payot, 1972.

SACCONI (Raynier): **Summa de Calharis**, ed. A. Dondaine. A 13th-century Neo-Manichaean treatise. Rome, 1939, pp. 64–78.

SHAHAR (Sh.): *Catharism and the Beginnings of Kabbalah.* Annales, Economies, Societies, Civilisations, October 1974, Paris.

SÖDERBERG (H.): *The Cathar Movement.* Uppsala, 1949.

T VIANI (H.): *A Piedmontese Heresy in the 2nd Century.* Annales, Economies, Societies, Civilisations, October 1974, Paris.

JHOUZELLIER (Ch.): *An Unpublished Cathar Treatise from the Early 13th Century Based on Durand of Huesca's* 'Liber *contra Manicheos'.* **Louvain, 1961.**

— *An Anti-Cathar Treatise:* Durand *of Huesca's *Liber* contra *Manicheos*, the unpublished text edited and annotated* by Christine Thouzellier. *Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense*, Leuven, 1964.

— *Catharism and Waldensianism* in Languedoc *at the end of the 12th century*

and at the beginning of the 13th century. Paris, P.U.F., 1966.

— **The Book of* the *Two* Principles*, with an introduction and *critical etexte* by Christine Thouzellier. Paris, Editions du Cerf, 1973.

— *Medieval Controversy in Languedoc Concerning the* Meaning *of* the Word

nihil — On the Equality of the Two Gods in Catharism. Annales du Midi, vol. 82, no. 99, October–December **1970.**

VENCI£ELEER (Th.). *A Gloss on the Lord's Prayer,* in: *Belgian* Journal *of Philosophy*

and History, vol. XXXIX, 1961, pp. 759–752.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ï. INTRODUCTION 7

CHAPTER ONE: THE Cathar Interpretation of the *‹ Ivan-
GILL'S ACCORDING TO SAU JsxN 15

CHAPTER Ï Ï THE CATHAR TOWN OF BARRIOZOUÉ IN
CARCASSONNE. — AUGUSTINIANISM AND CHARISMA . 29

CHAPTER III: The METAPHYSICS OF Lucio,
— 'THE BOOK OF THE TWO PRINCIPLES' 73

CHAPTER II : The RADICAL EQUALITARIANISM.
THE CATHAR MAN sets out 125

APPENDICES °

1. CHAPTER XI OF THE BOOK AGAINST THE MANICHEANS ('LIBER CONTRA MANI-CHEOS') (1222–1223?) BY DURAND OF HUESCA..... . 137

2. LIBER SOLILOQ, UIOR UM AD DE UM D (SOLILOQ, APOPHYRIA), CHAPTER V: 'QUID SIT NIHIL FIERI †' (IS IT TRUE THAT NOTHING WILL COME TO BE †?) . . 163

3. 'THE BOOK OF THE TWO PRINCIPLES.' 1 TREATISE ON FREE WILL' t‹ P ROBATI O ÇJUOD NON SIT Li-
BERUM ARBITRUM', Dondaine edition of the *Liber de duobus principiis*, pp. 92–93. Thouzel-lier edition, pp. 201–226 167

4. 'ExEMPLA' AND CATHAR MYTHS. 173

li. THE 'OMNIA MALA' AND THE 'NIHIL' (regarding Mr Thouzellier's article: 'THE CATHARS THE LANGUAGE OF THE DOCS AND 'NIHIL' › (John 1:8). — Annales – Economies, Societies, Civilisations, January–February 1969) 187

6. A BSTRACT OCCITAN OF CATHARISM 191

BIBLIOGRAPHY 201

BERSERKER

BOOKS